Hanns Heinz Ewers

Vampire

A New Translation

By Joe E. Bandel

VAMPIRE

A Wild Story in Scraps and Colors

by Hanns Heinz Ewers
Translated by Joe E. Bandel

published by Bandel Books
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Habent Sua Fata Libelli

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A Wild Story in Scraps and Colors

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Habent Sua Fata Libelli

Books Have Their Destinies

This is especially true of this book before it was printed. The manuscript was completed December 1916 in Seville, Spain. H.H.E. sent it out on a Norwegian ship back to Germany. While the ship, *Der Kapitän*, was in port in Brest, France, the French confiscated the manuscript and destroyed it.

H.H.E. then sent a heavily reworked copy from New York in the spring of 1917. A Mr. R out of Vienna attempted to carry it along with other secret papers back to Germany. He was travelling as a steward on a Swedish streamer and had been suspected of carrying secret messages for a long time.

The English arrested him in Kirkwall, but never found the papers that he had hidden on the ship. After five months of fruitless searching and investigating the British authorities let the dangerous man go. They brought him back to the same ship that was now again on its way back to America.

He recovered all of his things safely from the hiding place thinking to faithfully resume his activities and deliver the papers. Shortly after this Mr. R was taken into custody by the American authorities and all of his things confiscated, the manuscript as well.

He was released a 2nd time, but the investigation continued late into the summer of 1918. Happily, he was finally able to lie his way out of that and through a fortunate coincidence managed to get several of his things back including the manuscript. He buried it with other documents in a box in his garden in the Bronx.

H.H.E. searched through half a dozen homes trying to rescue a 3rd copy he had entrusted to an American secretary, Frl.J.I., for safekeeping. The authorities searched her house, but she had passed it on to an Irish Lady that she had befriended. The agents soon came there as well. It was being burned in a back room as the tracker dogs of the Ministry of Justice were searching for it in the front rooms of her home.

In the meantime H.H.E. had been taken into custody. In every interrogation the question of the manuscript “Vampire” was the central

point. A couple chapters had been published in a Spanish book and the English Secret Service knew about it. They had been observing H.H.E. since 1914 and had communicated all of his moves and activities to the American authorities.

While he was often questioned for hours about the **Vampire** manuscript, **The Fatherland**, a German propaganda newsletter, lay cozy and snug in the same room beautifully wrapped in brown wrapping paper in the filing cabinet under the letter “R”. God knows what dangerous ideas were contained in it!

H.H.E. believed, by the way, that the manuscript had long since arrived in Germany and could only assure the inquisitors that it was not in his possession. The manuscript was considered so pernicious by the authorities that they put it on the “Index” of banned books. It was considered a very serious violation to have or publish one of these books. If you had one you were supposed to confess and turn it over to the authorities immediately.

A year later in the summer of 1919 after an unsympathetic stay in a prison, penitentiary and concentration camp, H.H.E. found himself once more in New York enjoying a restricted freedom when he bumped into Mr. R again.

Mr. R had dug up his treasures and brought the manuscript back to him. By now the single surviving manuscript was only as free as he was. His parole was under the stipulation not to publish neither in the United States nor in any other land, neither in English nor in any other language, neither privately nor officially, neither directly nor indirectly, and so on…

You can see how efficient the American authorities are when they have something at all intellectual to suppress! H.H.E. had been censored in Berlin and Vienna, in St. Petersburg, Rome and Paris, but never as completely as he was in the United States at this time. In addition, he was not allowed to leave the country and kept under constant surveillance.

Now he is finally back in Europe and enjoying a degree of personal freedom and free speech, at least as much as is currently permitted in Democratically governed countries.

The French, the English and the Americans have done their best to destroy this book as well as the person that wrote it.

That they didn’t was fate. Perhaps fate also helped in saving the chapter **Carnelians** that had been cut up by a scorpion, and as in the chapter **Beryls**

helped in his many moves during those years, giving him strength and character. Both of which also gave him a beautiful woman.

Naples, 7 July, 1920

Vampire

A Wild Story in Scraps and Colors

To Adele G.L.

I fought with everyone; more than with everyone – with you.
I suffered much; and so, I suppose, did you.
And out of those cruel wounds and bleeding years Grew forth this book, brimful of love and pain.
It is your book – take it with gracious hands!

HHE

My muse by no means deals in fiction, she gathers a repertory of facts. And that's one cause, she meets with contradiction. For too much truth, at first sight, never attracts.
–Byron

Chapter One: Opals

"Now the melancholy God protect thee and the tailor, make thy garment of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is very opal."
–Shakespeare, Twelfth-Night

In the year, in which the entire world became insane, he moved out for a different time. He always said, for a different time. He didn't count whether it was the seventh time or the tenth time or the twelfth.

He had been living at home for three years now, over three years in his old homeland in Europe. He knew very well that he was sick, Europe made him sick. The homeland that he loved made him sick.

He knew it after a year. After two years his friends saw it. After three years everyone that he spoke with noticed. It was in his nerves, somehow-

But he also knew what would cure him, or maybe not cure him, but give him enough strength for another year in the homeland.

When he drank the fiery heat of the tropics, when he breathed the solitude of the wilderness, when his longing bathed itself in the infinity of the oceans, he became healthy, or almost healthy. He was almost healthy on that day in Antofagasta, Chile. Only a little something was holding back, something weak, strange, tender and intractable.

Frank Braun laughed about it, extended his arms out wide and stretched himself, sensing his old strength, as if every muscle in his body were at play. He would have loved to dive in the water with the sea lions and compete with them swimming through the swarms of herring in the harbor of Antofagasta.

That was the day the weather glowed and flickered in the skies of the homeland, the day the screams rang around the world. They coursed through all the wires on the oceans and on the land, through the air, and in all the radio waveband signals. They were the wild screams of Sarajevo and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

He had wanted to see the world so he had boarded a steamer in Hamburg. It was as if the ocean carried him and not the ship. The ship was only the cradle that held him. It was the almighty Mother who rocked it.

The ocean sang, sang for him. When he closed his eyes he could hear the melody and understand the words.

He got to know the Captain and some of the crew. Near St. Paul's reef in the middle of the ocean he asked if they could stop for a few hours to fish for some sharks. The Captain didn't want to, but said he would ask the engineer. The engineer gave the good word, saying that he could make up the lost time before they got to Montevideo.

So they stopped, baited some hooks, threw them out and caught five powerful fellows. Like all seamen, they sliced the bodies open to look for human remains but found nothing. There was no surplus of human flesh in the middle of the Atlantic by St. Paul's reef.

Down under in Punta Arenas they met up with a dirty tramp steamer out of the La Plata government. It was going around between the islands lost. The Captain was a Basque from out of the mountains and was supposed to take soundings at different locations but couldn't find them. There was a Cosmos agent onboard out of Sudhafen, Germany. He copied some figures out of a German book he had and gave them to the Captain. The Captain paid with many furs and sealskins and went back to Buenos Aires. No one ever read it.

They crossed the straits of Magellan to Tierra del Fuego, then over to Patagonia. They shot wild Llamas in South America and in North America they shot otters and large fox. Up in Alaska they visited the wretched goldminers who were always searching, freezing, swearing and drinking. They had a few skirmishes with the boat Indians, naked in the cold, starving, dirty, pitiful animals that would sell their lives for a mouthful of schnapps.

In a quiet bay he lay on the deck watching the blue glaciers break off and slide deep down into the ocean. On the way back he looked into the water for a seal or penguin and threw out bacon pieces for the cape pigeons, Boobies, and albatross that were putting on a show like clumsy giant ducks.

In the long evenings he would lay below in his cabin on furs or beneath furs or smoke and play chess with the Swedish helmsman. There were his old books as well. He certainly dreamed with them. There were not very many of them, only six or seven; Jacomino's *Fra. of Verona*, Jacopone's *da Todi*, and others by Brother Pacificus and St. Bonaventure.

The Swede looked at them derisively and a bit skittishly, "They never went around Cape Horn!"

Frank Braun said, “Never? Magellan probably had Brother Pacificus and St. Bonaventure on his bookshelf when he went around it for the first time.”

He left the ship, bought a pair of horses somewhere and rode off with two Indians through Patagonia, climbed over the Andes and then down into Coronal, Chile. He climbed on a small whaler at a Norwegian station and helped harpoon two whales. He broke off a pair of teeth from the huge animals and rode back to the ship snail slow in the cockleshell towing both huge animals, one on the port side and one on the starboard.

Then he went through German Chile, north with the train through Spanish Chile, once more over the Andes and back to Bolivia. He sang and drank with the German officers stationed there that were making soldiers out of the barefooted monkeys.

By that time he was ready to go back. There was a steamer from Hapag Lines at anchor waiting in Antofagasta harbor. He was strong and healthy except for that little something that would never leave. He got on a small boat and went out to meet it.

The green water was so clear you could see many meters down. Close by the boat was a thick cloud of waltzing, shoving swarms of herring that were gleaming bright like a silver patina. There were a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand herring in the silver cloud.

The sea lions were hunting them and driving them deeper into the harbor. They formed a large half circle that surrounded the fish completely from shore to bay and back to shore on the other side. Like skilled cattle drivers one surfaced and then another. An old one surfaced and pushed against the boat’s rudder.

Oh, the old fellow knew well enough that he was free, that he was protected and that no one on the West Coast would be permitted to harm him. He was curious about the boat. Would anyone come out into the water? Why was it going to the ship? Who would be dumb enough to leave this place? To go away from this happy hunting ground of uncountable herring?

Fools, he thought, fools! He pushed his powerful body in a hard leap half out of the water and dove back in, head over heals reveling in the rich booty. Behind him stretched the Saltpeter wasteland, a bleak, desolate stretch that rose at almost thirty degrees between the ocean and the mountains.

It was brown, white, yellow and red. There were no trees, no shrubs, not a blade of grass, nothing. The city, Antofagasta, stood out in the heat of the sun like Arequipa, like Mollendo, like Iquique and all the other cities, the German, the English, the Chilean, the Croatian and the Syrian cities. They were all torn out of the unproductive soil, the same soil that in the old country would give lush crops.

The people were pale and withered like the wasteland around them. It was as if a huge sigh sounded over the long West Coast, “Water!” There was a mighty ocean full of water close by but it did not help!

The sea lion didn’t understand at all. Flocks of white birds swarmed on the cliffs and the hunt was on, the great drive hunt. The females and young animals took the middle, on both flanks were the older and stronger ones. The circle always closed tighter, the water became more shallow, the herring were always being pushed in on the breakwater.

No humans were fishing, it was a holiday. A couple of tired and sleepy rascals looked downward from the harbor as the sea lions seized, grasped, devoured and hunted in the silver cloud. They throw themselves high and shot back into the water, ten, twenty of them at the same time.

Little clever heads showed between them, they were almost like people, these birds that had become fish, the penguins. They were jealous because they could only seize one fish at a time while the seals were devouring dozens.

An ancient giant bull, heavy and forceful, lifted himself onto the pier with a loud crash. He panted, snorted and shook his head, blinking through the bright sunlight over at the boat.

He knew it, this old one, knew it well, knew the secret of life. To become a fish, he thought. That’s what it is! For humans as well as for the saucy birds, for the penguins! Become a fish, oh, you silly people, become a fish! Come back into the ocean!

He laughed, looked smiling at the clumsy pelican that was over in the water splashing like a thick ball! It stuck its head under the water and brought it back out with a herring in its beak. Then it threw the fish high and caught it in its craw before fluttering laboriously up from the waves back to the shelter of the cliffs.

Clumsy and awkward, thought the old one, so clumsy and awkward! As if to prove his point, he sprang down from the pier with a mighty leap into the water and emerged in the blink of an eye with the booty between

his teeth. It was not a herring this time but a different fish three feet long. He held the wriggling fish sideways in his mouth, threw it high like the pelican and caught it. Then he did it again like a juggler!

Seagulls came, five or six of them, screaming and shrieking as they flew around his head pecking at the fish, wanting their share as well. He bit it in two, devoured one half and left the other for the birds, magnanimous, almost compassionate, and returned once more to the hunt.

* *
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He climbed up the shaky gangway onto the Hapag steamer. A tall, blond, blue eyed officer came to greet him and shook his hand vigorously. Frank Braun recognized him immediately. They had traveled the South Sea together years ago.

“How’s it going?” He asked.

“If you’re coming, great!” The German cried, “The Egg man comes again!”

Frank Braun laughed. “Egg man”, that was what they used to call him. He had been the only passenger and popular in the officer’s mess. When he was along they were all served passenger fare. The officer’s mess didn’t include eggs.

“That’s right,” he said.

He turned around and saw a couple of men and women standing at the rail. “They’re passengers aren’t they?”

The second officer nodded. “Yes, they are, but steerage only! They are all over the ship! We have an entire circus on board! They are headed for Guayaquil, Ecuador.”

Then the Captain came up with an agent who read them the telegram about the assassination of the heir to the throne.

“It means war over there!” The Captain said. “Vienna won’t take that quietly, not that!”

The Second slapped himself on the thigh, “It has already taken much too much from those vermin. They deserve three good knocks.”

Then he whistled, “Prince Eugene, the noble knight”.

The Circus people had made themselves comfortable on deck. Little tents had been pitched near the cages. There were three lions, a magnificent

tiger, a mangy old wolf, a Syrian dancing bear, a pair of hyenas, baboons and long tailed monkeys. There was also a Turkish Angora tomcat, a poodle and a bulldog. There were other animals too, Cockatoos, parrots, and of course eighteen horses and near them a donkey.

The circus Ring Master was a fat, very fat and puffy woman from out of Toulouse, France. There were two brothers from out of Maestricht in the Netherlands. One was the lion tamer and the other was the sword swallower and juggler. There were two equestrians and two dancers. All four were very beautiful. There were several clowns, the handlers and finally Louison. She was a blond thing only eleven years old and the Ring Master's foster child. She danced on the high wire.

She was all over the ship, climbing in the masts, downstairs in the engine room with the engineer, up on the bridge playing games with the Captain and officers, in the kitchen with the cook and even down in the stern with the carpenter.

Every sailor, and every stoker knew her and each always had a little something for her. Whenever her mama needed something she sent Louison and you always needed something when you were on board a ship with a circus, twenty people and fifty-two animals.

One Sunday they lay in port at Arequipa, Peru. The clowns, dancers and sword swallower gave a little performance in the Plaza. In the evening the main performance was on board and the Captain did the honors.

The bear danced, the clowns beat themselves and the monkeys played soldiers. The fat Ring Master led the parrots around; the dancing girls leaped and the sword swallower devoured ten sabers.

Some of the ship's company thought he was better, while others thought the dancers were. But there was one thing everyone was in agreement about. It was little Louison that gave the greatest performance.

A high wire had been strung the length of the ship from one mast to the other. At the top of each mast burned Bengal torches, a green one forward and a red one aft. It didn't feel right to the Captain, those colors always meant port and starboard, but he let it go. It was what Louison wanted. His heart leapt at how her she scampered up the mast.

"Look at that fellows!" He cried to the sailors, "You can learn something from her!"

Louison wore a rose red vest. She laughed and her blond hair fluttered in the night breeze. The man in the crow's nest gave her a long bar. Both

ends were decorated with large Chinese lanterns, one red and the other green.

She gripped the rod firmly in the middle, then pushed her left foot out testing the cable like a pony tests the loose desert sand. Then she stepped out onto it. The seamen stared breathlessly; no one spoke a word.

Then suddenly the ship's cook gave a quick laugh, "She's got the green lamp on the port side and the red on the starboard!"

No one laughed. The Captain threw an angry look at him. Those standing near the cook hissed at him, but little Louison had understood him completely. She stood swaying on the cable, pulled her lips tightly together and carefully turned the bamboo bar. The right side rose and the left sank as she turned it end for end until the lamps were right. She nodded lightly, graciously to the bridge, to the captain and winked at him with clever little eyes.

He growled out of his brown beard, "Little girl! Brave little girl!"

But thick pearls of sweat beaded on his forehead.

No one said a word. No one clapped. They all stared up with tight throats, with baited breaths, up at the rose red child that danced among the stars in the night sky under the Southern Cross.

Slowly step by step she moved lightly swaying in the air from the red torch to the green torch. When she reached the foremast a sailor caught her, took the bar out of her hands. Then little Louison bowed, threw kisses down as thanks for the clapping of the callused hands, for the hoarse screams of the seamen. She signaled that she wanted to go back but the Captain wouldn't allow it.

"Never," he said. "I would rather do it myself than feel such fear!"

Louison went around with the plate collecting money and everyone gave something. All the ship's crew had a few coins secretly hidden away. But the Captain took her to his cabin, searched around in a drawer, and gave her a ribbon with the ship's name, *"Thuringia"*. Then he gave her a silver napkin ring with the Hapag logo on it. Little Louison kissed him.

They called at Ilo and Mollendo, ports in Peru. It was early Wednesday when Frank Braun came onto the bridge during the Second's watch.

"When will we reach Collao?" He asked. "I must get off there and visit Lima for a few days."

The Second laughed bitterly, "Collao? We will be there in two hours, but you can give up on going to Lima today doctor!"

That was unexpected.

“Why?” He asked. “Will we be leaving that soon? I was only going to shake hands with some old friends.”

The Second whistled a couple of shrill notes and then sullenly said, “Oh, we will have lots of time! We will be staying an entire week at Calleo, Only we won’t be going ashore!”

He raised his arm and pointed up at the mast. “There! See that!”

Frank Braun glanced up at a small yellow flag fluttering there.

“What happened?” He asked. “Who’s sick?”

The officer stepped closer to him. “The Captain was going to tell you when he came up. It’s no secret. We don’t know right now who is sick, only who is dead! We buried him at sea three hours ago.”

“Who?”

“The tall clown!”

“What was it?”

The Second shrugged his shoulders, “Yellow Fever!”

They were not allowed in Callao, Salavery, Manta, Guayaquil or Buenaventura. By the time they reached Cape Blanco two of the horse handlers had died. A week later they sent one of the equestrians into the sea. There was no doctor on board. They were sent away from one port after another cruelly, without compassion or mercy.

The Second cursed, “The swine!”.

But the Captain said, “They have every right! They don’t have the facilities. Should they let their entire city get contaminated because of us?”

They crawled northward at a speed of four knots toward Panama. That was their hope. It was in possession of the Yankees but they were sent away from there too. The quarantine station was already overflowing. What if they waited six weeks?

“It would be much better to try for California,” the American doctor called out. “They will certainly help! No English ports will burn their fingers on you!”

“No English?”

That was when they learned they were at war, at war with France, with Russia and with England.

The Captain laughed, “Anyone else?”

“Oh, yes, “cried the Port Commissioner. “Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Portugal and soon the Japanese! Then the Italians, the

Romanians and the Greeks."

He didn't believe it, but the Port Commissioner laughed scornfully and sent over a bundle of newspapers.

"Here, read for yourself! It's all about Germany. By the time you get to Frisco's Golden Gate it will be all over and Germany will be wiped off the map."

He asked if they wanted any supplies but the Captain refused anything. He only took on fresh water and a chest of medical supplies. Then they steamed away.

Above on the bridge he unfolded the newspapers, the **New York Herald**, **The New York Times**, **The Tribune**, **The Sun**, and a couple of local papers from the Panama Canal. He stared at the large headlines.

"180,000 Germans fall in the storming of Liege fortress."

"The Crown Prince attempts suicide."

"Serbians defeat Austria capturing 80,000; over 150,000 dead."

"Russia attacks Galicia, Austria loses over 400,000."

"Battle in the North Sea! Nineteen German battleships sank by the English."

The Captain laid the newspapers down, pushed them over to the engineer but he pushed them back.

"No, I don't want to read anymore."

"What do you think doctor?" The Captain asked.

"Exaggeration, naturally," said Frank Braun.

The Captain stood up, "Exaggeration? I will tell you something. It is all a bunch of filthy lies! A low down American swindle!"

The Second stood in the doorway, "May I take a look at them for a minute?"

The Captain gave him the entire bundle. "There! Take them all! Take them away as quickly as possible."

He climbed down from the bridge with hard heavy steps.

Frank Braun went to his cabin and lay down. What was happening? What had happened to the others in the last fifteen minutes? What was going to happen? Was the Captain different, the engineer? Was he? It seemed as if he was drunk. He wanted to concentrate and couldn't.

He took down a book at random, Jacopone's *da Todi*, opened it up and began to sing softly:

By, the crib wherein reposing,
With His eyes in slumber closing,
Lay serene her Infant-boy.

Stood the beauteous Mother feeling,
Bliss that could not bear concealing,
So her face o'erflowed with joy.

Oh, the rapture naught could smother
Of that most Immaculate Mother
Of the Sole-begotten One;

Then with laughing heart exulting,

She beheld her hopes resulting
In the great birth of her Son.

Who would not with gratulation
See the happy consolation
Of Christ's Mother undefiled.

He stopped. That was so beautiful, so very beautiful. From where did the author take these colors, these shimmering exultant rainbow colors? This poor fool from Todi?

Then, "No!" Why should he now sing the *Stabat Mater Speciosa*? Why now of all times? He should be singing the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*! Don't millions of people sing the *Dolorosa* every day whereas the *Speciosa* has only been read by a hundred people in all the time since it was written. The *Dolorosa* is the song of the people!

He began:

The grieving Mother stood
Beside the cross weeping
Where her son was hanging

He sprang up, that applied to the author, who was a Saint, a lunatic and a poet all at the same time! Who is the Virgin today? Speciosa, Dolorosa, or whoever the poet sees in her!

Poet? Oh, there are no more poets today! There are only fists, bombs, grenades and torpedoes!

He ran through the corridors, up the stairs, and over the deck to some place different, the front of the bow. He leaned over the railing, and stared into the blue waves that were parting as the old ship cut through them.

The white foam down there sang to him like doves, like they had so often sang to him in the past. But this time it was no love song, no song from his bleeding heart. It was no perky song that whistled through the wind like the beating of a whip. It sobbed like a refrain, this song of the white doves that sang in the waves.

O Mother, fountain of love
Make me feel the power of sorrow
That I may grieve with you,

Grant that my heart may burn
In the love of the Lord Christ
That I may greatly please him!

And his lips spoke, “Pray for us here and over there O blessed one, Pray for us! Please sweet Virgin, blessed Virgin, grant that we may return home to our Fatherland! Am I not your choice, sweet Virgin Mary? Who loves you in these days as I love you? Who sings your songs, who writes your fables.

Dear Lady, Sweet beloved Lady, Beautiful heavenly Lady, take me home to the Father –to the Fath –to the –.

He could not speak it out loud. The land that now lay before his closed eyes, that was all around him, that was the land of the Saints and of the sorcerers as well. He saw Narni, Terni, Spoleto, Trevi and Peragia as well as other towns in Italy.

He saw the city of St. Francis and of the blessed Jakob, saw the sweet shore of Transumener lake. Was that his Fatherland? Didn’t it lie somewhere between Assisi and Todi?

Weren't they both the Guelphs, loyal to the Pope and the hated the Ghibellines, loyal to the German Emperor? Wasn't St. Francis still honored in France? Weren't his words of love and a better way still preached in the French language at the Paris courts as they were in the days of Virgil and Dante?

He loved the Holy St. Francis who spoke to the birds and sang the great song of his sister the sun! But he loved the other no less, the Hohenstaufen Kaiser, the one thrown into hell. Enzio's and Manfred's father, whom with a German fist swayed the entire world. His Empire endured for centuries.

When the crusader was in Palermo, Italy, he wrote the cheeky book *De Tribus Impestoribus*, The Three Impostors. Frank Braun thought, "All three equally! Only a Bavarian Kaiser could come up with that!"

What was his Fatherland? His homeland, now that was certain. It was Europe. He was at home in Vienna, in Berlin, in Munich and on the Rhine. But he was not any less at home in Britain, the Provinces, in Paris or Italy. He was at home everywhere! In Andalusia as well as in Madrid where the Prado was restored, in Stockholm, in Pest, in Zurich and Antwerp.

What was his Fatherland? Was he a German? Was he? Just because he was born somewhere on the Rhine? Didn't he know more languages and speak them more often than he spoke German?

Was he International? No, that didn't feel right. There was a higher nation that stood over all peoples, with different citizens, higher, more chivalrous and greater. He called it the Nation of Culture. It belonged to everyone, and towered over the masses. He knew it well, had found its citizens in all parts of the world. It existed, those people existed. There was certainly no doubt about it.

It was so near, you could almost reach out and touch it with your hands. But that was yesterday. And today? It was gone, as if it had never existed! There were only Germans, Russians, Frenchmen, Englishmen and they were all mutually killing each other.

Where should he go? To which Fatherland?

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He laughed bitterly. Neither of these were the Fatherland that the man from Todi had been thinking of when he called upon the Mother of God!

The Fatherland that he had been thinking of was not his Todi that was even then sending 40,000 men on foot and on horseback against the neighboring city, Perugia, the capital city of the Province of Umbria.

These provinces and cities had been commanded to fight against each other for Pope and for King, most certainly not for Italy! In this battle of Pope, King, Kaiser, Province and Prince they were devouring each other! Italy was no country, it was just a mark on the map, a murderous ocean in which the big fish devoured the smaller ones!

The poor fool Jakob's Fatherland was the quiet peace of the Holy Virgin's glorified womb. And the other, the Hohenstaufen Kaiser Frederick, what was his Fatherland? This Christ and the Christian prophets that he sneered at just as he did the Jews and the Arabs? This German that held court in Palermo, this Chancellor, this poet from Pisa, whose best friend was a Jew from Jaffa and who gave wise counsel to the Saracens, to the Muslims! No, that Kaiser laughed just as lightly over the hoax of Fatherland as he did over religion!

Fatherland? This ship was his Fatherland now! With its German officers and engineers, its Chinese stokers for the engine and its passengers, the circus people. They were an outcast folk of French, Flemish, Spanish, Basque and British solidly forged together and now shaking and howling under the lash of a yellow demon!

The day before yesterday the stable master had died and so had the humpbacked stable hand. Last night near Panama it had been the sword swallower. Who will feed the ocean today?

The mighty lion tamer was lying there in front of the lion's cage. Near him was the flabby Ring Master. Blond Louison was crouched on the stairs. She was not playing, not laughing, just nervously plucking at the silver beads of her rosary. Not her, not the little Louison! Dear Virgin Mother, not little Louison!

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He headed back to his cabin, then heard noises below deck, yells and excited voices. He went down, threw open the door to the officer's mess. The noise was coming from the cabin boy, the ship's officer and the engineer. They were laughing and drinking.

“Prosit! Doctor!” The third cried, handing him a glass of beer. “Long live Alexander von Kluck!”

“What the devil is going on?” Frank Braun asked.

The engineer was leaning over the table eagerly reading the papers that had been spread out on it.

“Brussel,” he cried. “Here too! They have Brussel! Now they will go after Antwerp! The Germans are winning doctor,” exulted the second. “They have kept Liege, have taken Namur in Belgium and Lille in France! They besiege Maubeuge and beat the God damned English at Mons! They are marching on Paris!”

He ripped open a newspaper and held it in his face. Here, read for yourself! It tells everything, only it’s hidden somewhere on the sixteenth or seventeenth page. The headlines are a pack of lies. These American swine newspapers the English must have paid them to lie to the readers!

Frank Braun took the newspaper, “And the war with Serbia and Russia? The naval battle where nineteen German battleships were sunk? And –”

The little assistant paymaster pounded his fist on the table. “Lies! All stinking lies! The Germans are winning! Dear God, how is that even possible!”

He raised up another glass, “Drink doctor, drink. For the love of Germany, for the love of the Kaiser!”

Frank Braun decided and raised his glass, “For love of the Fatherland.”

They bellowed and exulted, “The Fatherland, our German Fatherland.”

“Cut out the articles and bring them to the Captain,” he said. Then he left.

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How strange that he, Frank Braun, had drunk to Germany and to the Kaiser! To the Fatherland. He was certainly not serious about it. But he had felt obliged because those fellows were so happy. How their eyes shone! How their hearts rejoiced and exulted! How it made them forget everything else, forget the yellow fever, the menacing death that clawed at them and hunted them down like lepers on the merciless ocean!

That was all they could think of, all they could feel, “The Germans are winning!”

It was true, the news made him happy too, but it was only a light tickle, some pleasant scribbles to scratch his itching soul. It didn’t grab him, didn’t thrill him like it did the others.

Excite? Him? “Oh, yes,” but only because this lighthearted rejoicing, this wild enthusiasm gave them all a break, something different, something common, something volcanic. That was a good thing, that alone.

It would really be good if he could be over there, able to see, to feel, to experience the powerful ocean of the German masses, things that he could only see here in the raised beer glass. The immense power of suggestion, this delirious belief, of a hundred million people. Oh yes, now that could move mountains! That would be truly great! That would be beautiful!

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None of the circus people died that day, but three coolies and a German sailor did. They called at Corinto, Nicaragua, and were turned away, they were chased out of La Libertad, Peru. It was the same at Salvador and San Jose in Guatemala.

Three more of the crew died, two Chinese and two Spanish stable hands. The red haired clown died and the old dancer. The third officer died too, the tall blond youth from Rostock. The Chinese refused to touch the bodies so the helmsman and the cooks mate took them. Three days later they were dead.

On deck, the cabin boy, Moses, died. Two hours later the Ring Master died. She had made up a will for Louison Gunster leaving it in the custody of the Captain. If the little one died everything should be given to the surviving members of the circus troop. Everything, the animals, the circus tent, the wardrobe, the boxes and crates and the little bit of money.

Her death was hard. She screamed and raved, fought so long, always calling out for a priest.

On the day she died an English cruiser stopped them, shot twice over their bow and commanded them to turn around and drop anchor. They lay there as a launch came alongside and an officer sprang up the steps.

“Where is the Captain?” He asked.

The Captain was standing right in front of him. “Here,” he said. “What do you want?”

“You are my prisoner!” said the Englishman. “You are coming aboard the *Glasgow*. I am taking command of your ship. Lower the German flag.”

“I can’t,” said the Captain. What about the other flag?”

“What?” Demanded the officer, “What? Are refusing my order to go back to my ship?”

“I refuse,” said the German.

The Englishman blew his whistle and six sailors immediately sprang up onboard from the launch.

“Seize him!” He commanded.

“Don’t touch me,” said the Captain “It will be much better for you.”

He spoke so quietly and calmly, so certainly and convincingly that they hesitated.

“We have Yellow Fever on board.” He waved around him. “Eighteen dead, both crew and passengers. Two corpses are still on board.”

He pointed with his hand to the yellow flag flying overhead, then signaled his first officer, “Bring the Gentleman the ship’s log.”

“It is all a hoax,” cried the Englishman. But he sent the boat back to the cruiser for the doctor. The first officer tried to give him the logbook but he waved it scornfully away.

“I can’t read German,” he said. “You could have written anything in there.”

The doctor came and they showed him the sacks the corpses were sewn into.

“Cut them open,” he commanded.

“Cut them open yourself,” the Captain came back at him.

The second grinned. The doctor waved an English sailor over. He opened it skillfully enough cutting through the seam and parting the canvas. The doctor bent over the ghastly remains that had once been the circus Ring Master. Then he went back and spoke softly with his officer.

“Would you like to see the sick ones?” The Captain asked. “I have nine more, one or two may be dead by now.”

The doctor didn’t answer. The officer straightened his shoulders, and turned back to the Captain.

“I will see what my Commander orders. In the meantime stay quietly right where you are. I will leave these six men to keep watch on you.”

He saluted lightly and turned to go back to the launch but the Captain stood in his way.

“Just a minute Sir,” he said. “Please take these six men back with you. Instead, let me sew my corpses back into the canvas and throw them overboard. Tell your Captain that I don’t care what command he gives.

After you get back on board I will wait exactly ten minutes, do you hear me! That gives you time to speak with your Commander, to give your report. Then I will steam away.”

The Englishman swallowed an oath. He spit over the railing, cleared his throat and said as quietly as possible.

“Be reasonable man! Our cannons will sink your tin can as soon as a mouthful of smoke comes out of your stack!”

The Captain did not back down.

“Explain that to your grandmother then. I have passengers on board, Spanish, Belgian, Hollanders and Frenchmen. Shoot then if you want to be a hero!”

The officer didn’t say any more. He signaled his crew to get back into the launch. You could see the sailors were glad to be leaving the fever ship.

The *Thuringia* waited until the ten minutes were up, then the Captain gave the order to steam ahead. He stood above on the bridge, beside the helmsman. He swung the bow around beautifully, just missing the English cruiser. Then he set off to the North.

The *Glasgow* fired once over their bow and then once more. Then a sharp shot high over the mast that splashed far away into the ocean.

The *Thuringia* answered with her flags. Three times they raised the Union Jack till it touched the German flag in greeting. They didn’t stop for a second but crawled slowly Northward at a snail’s pace. The Captain looked for a long time lovingly at his black, white and red flag that bore the iron cross.

The English cruiser veered away to the south. Its Commander knew all right, knew that the *Thuringia* was the Devil’s Kiss, a fever ship.

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Someone died every day and every night. The second equestrian died, three stable hands and the last of the clowns. Then the second engineer, a steward, a Chinese and two other members of the crew died and more were always getting sick. They tried four Mexican ports and were chased out of them all.

One morning the lion tamer sent for the Captain. He told the Captain that he was going to die and asked him to take care of his animals.

“Don’t let them starve!” He implored. “Give them their food and when that runs out shoot them!”

The Captain promised he would but the mighty Fleming was not satisfied.

“Swear it Captain,” he urged. “Swear it to me.”

“Isn’t it enough that I give you my word of honor?” The Captain said. “As an officer of the German merchant marine?”

“Ok, Ok,” whined the other. “Yes, certainly! But please captain, swear it to me anyway!”

The Captain raised his right hand, “How would you like me to swear?”

“By God!” The diseased man whispered.

The Captain spoke, “I swear to you by God that I will care for your lions.”

“And for the tiger,” cried the Fleming.

“Certainly,” confirmed the Captain. “For the tiger and all the other animals on board. I swear it to you! Are you satisfied?”

The lion tamer sobbed, grabbed the right hand of the Captain and kissed it with fevered lips. The Captain started, then let him have his hand. He went back up the steps, and looked thoughtfully at his hand.

“Get my bath ready,” he cried out to the steward. “And throw some of that antiseptic stuff into it.”

He took a few steps and then turned around. “Now’s as good a time as any,” he muttered. He stepped into a tent. There sitting cross-legged on the floor was the beautiful dancer. She had both arms around the blonde child that was sleeping in her lap, pale, miserably thin and convulsed with fever.

“How is she?” He asked. “Any better since this morning?”

The Spanish dancer shook her head.

“So she’s not any better Madam!” The Captain said. “Still, you are healthy. You must think about yourself. I would like to give you a cabin, tonight.”

The maiden stared at him. “Yes Captain,” she said slowly. “If I can take the little one with me.”

The Captain growled. He tried putting a real hard ring in his voice but it didn’t work.

“The little one is sick! You are healthy. You must leave her or you will get sick yourself. You can’t keep holding her in your arms. You must look after yourself.”

The dancer laughed, “Are you looking after yourself Captain? Why are you the only one on this ship that comes to see us?”

The Captain shouted, “Don’t be so stupid Madam! It is something entirely different. I have obligations. Now stand up and come with me!”

But the maiden didn’t move. “You are married Captain. You have a wife back home and five children. I know because Louison told me about them, four boys and a blonde girl just as old, as slender, as blue eyed as Louison is. But I have no one else in the world and I have obligations too.”

“Nonsense,” cursed the Captain. “Silly nonsense! Your –”

But he didn’t speak anymore because Louison woke up. She recognized him and reached out to him with both arms.

“Captain,” she babbled. “Dear Captain.”

The Captain bent down, took the little one’s arm, felt her pulse and patted her lightly on the cheeks.

“Brave little one!”

He stepped to the tent entrance, ripped open the flap and shouted.

“Steward,” he cried. “Steward!”

When the steward appeared he continued. “The Damsel will go with you! Have the head steward give her a cabin, twelve or fourteen. Before you take her there make sure she takes a bath in my cabin, the one you prepared for me. Understand?”

“Yes Sir, Captain,” cried the steward.

The Captain put the tent flap back; laid the little girl to rest on the mattress and kneeled in front of her. He turned to get a glass of water, and saw that the dancer was still standing there.

“What are you waiting for?” He hissed. “You can see that I am staying.”

“Oh, Captain,” she said. “You are so good –”

“Nonsense!” The Skipper bellowed. “Just go Madam.”

She took her towel and went.

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That evening Frank Braun met her. She stood in front of her cabin looking over at her tent. He thought, her eyes are sapphires. She spoke to him.

“Doctor, Please go over there and look inside. The Captain is in there with Louison. Tell me how she is doing.”

He nodded and went out between decks. By the cages he heard a voice, and stepped closer. He saw the Fleming standing by his lions. He was rubbing their manes through the bars. He had shoved huge pieces of meat in for them and was now lovingly stroking their mighty heads.

Softly, clearly, the whispered words rang out in a singsong over and over!

“Live well Allah! Live well Mahmud! The Captain will take care of you. He has promised, he has sworn. Live well Abdullah!”

Frank Braun stepped up to the tent, put his ear to the opening by the tent flap and listened. He didn’t hear anything. He quickly pushed the tent flap back and stepped inside.

Little Louison lay on her covers breathing lightly, her little hand clamped fast around the big finger of the Captain. He sat on the floor quietly without moving, cooling the fevered brow of the child with his right hand. He looked around and saw the intruder. He was about to fly into a rage but Frank Braun backed quickly out.

“Sorry Captain, Sir,” he said. “Sorry Sir.”

He went out of the tent and back to the dancer.

“Louison is still alive,” he said.

But in the morning she was dead.

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The lion tamer died two days later together with the last of the stable hands. Then Death took a break for awhile but woke back up with a vengeance as they neared San Francisco. At that point no one took them in, they were not brought to a quarantine station. They were told to drop anchor

two and a half miles out from shore. They needed to stay there for three weeks after the last death. A doctor did come every day to care for them as much as possible.

It was as if the yellow fiend wanted to prove what it could do. On the very first night it seized four Chinese and three German sailors. Two of the sailors had taken out the last corpses and the other had slept in the bunk next to them. For the first time the crew was seized with a great fear. They got together in groups and whispered.

The carpenter spoke for them. The crew wasn't refusing to take out the corpses, oh no! They wanted to show themselves and the Captain that they were with him all the way and would see this thing through to the end. But they requested they draw lots to see who would carry them out.

The Captain shook his head. "Whoever I order to get the corpses will get them!" He replied.

"I am the Captain on board. I alone decide, not chance!"

That was the reply he gave to the carpenter.

"What if they don't do what you order?" Frank Braun asked. "What if they refuse, now more than ever! Will that finally get through your hard skull? That's all we need! Rebellion on board! It's the only thing that hasn't happened to us yet!"

The Captain laughed. "You really think that would happen? I will show you how to handle these lads at sea."

He sent the steward after his two officers and the head engineer. He went with them below deck and the four men carried the corpses up onto the deck one after the other. Then he took some sail cloth, pieces of iron, huge needles and heavy thread. He sat cross-legged by one of the corpses like a tailor along with the second officer.

The engineer and the first got the next corpse ready. They rolled the canvas around the cadaver, put pieces of iron inside and sewed expertly, stitch by stitch, without a word.

One by one the rest of the crew came up, pressed around them, and watched, turning their caps in their hands. Frank Braun stood there with them.

Not wanting to, he stepped forward, and sat down next to the Captain in front of the repulsive corpse of a Chinese, picked up a needle. –This is idiotic, he thought. Why am I doing it? He wasn't doing a very good job

either. In a moment the carpenter sat beside him, grabbed the canvas and in three quick movements had the corpse wrapped in it.

“Get away!” The Captain cried. “No one touches the corpses without an order! The four of us are doing it. No one else!”

The carpenter stood up, and moved to the side. But Frank Braun said, “You command your crew Captain, but not me. I will do what I think is right.”

At the same time he was thinking, this is not right at all! What I am doing is unbelievably stupid! Why was he doing it then? He should have done the proper thing and moved away!

“It makes no difference to me,” nodded the Captain. “Sew away Doctor, but pull the cord tight.”

It rang like a judgement.

He sewed away laboriously, awkwardly, hating what he was doing. He took his handkerchief, clamped it between his teeth to cover his nose. His Chinese stank!

The others were done much sooner than he was. The second officer came over to help him. Then they carried the corpses over to a lifeboat and lowered it into the water. They rowed a couple hundred meters out from the ship and sank the dead there.

They took their hats off; the Captain said something that was supposed to be a prayer. It was not very solemn, it was too familiar.

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Early the next morning the second knocked on Frank Braun’s door.

“Come here Doctor,” he cried. “I want to show you something.”

They went up on deck. The officer waved at the water.

“You see anything?” He laughed. “That’s yours floating over there.”

“What’s floating?” Frank Braun asked.

“Your Chinese,” the other cried.

“Mine?” Frank Braun spit over the railing. “What makes you think it is mine?”

The officer quickly convinced him.

“It is most certainly yours! The pieces of iron that you put in with him to make him sink weren’t enough. I forgot to tell you about it. Now he came

back up and is floating around the ship.”

“What do you want to do?” Frank Braun asked. “Fish him back out? Put in more weight?”

“No,” said the second. “Not me! He has already been alone in the sun one day and will go back to being fish food.”

Then he became more serious. “The paymaster is sick.”

“Anyone else?” Frank Braun asked.

“No,” said the second. “No one else.”

Frank Braun thought, the paymaster! He hadn’t taken out any corpses, not him. He had avoided everyone, avoided touching the sick and the dead and still the yellow beast had gotten him.

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That day and through the entire night he was seized by an unrest that his books could not calm. He kept going up on deck, stood at the railing, paced up and down the bridge, and stared into the water at the bow or at the stern. The Chinese was always floating nearby, first in the hot sun and then in the moonlight.

He wants to take me, thought Frank Braun. The fever devil that is creeping in the yellow corpse wants me in his sailcloth. Against his will his lips spoke:

“Stabat Mater Dolorosa! -”

Speciosa! Speciosa! He corrected. But it still rang: Dolorosa!

It was the crucifixion; the image wouldn’t leave, and held him fast without compassion, without escape, the one from Colmar. How often had he stood there before *The Small Crucifixion*, the dreadful painting by Matthias Grunewald. He never wanted to go there but it pulled at him. Whenever he was in Freiburg, in Strasburg, he always took the train to Colmar. He had to. Once he went there with a beautiful woman.

He told her, “It is a powerful work of art. You must see it!”

The beautiful woman saw it. She became pale white, then green like the rotting flesh of the Messiah. She fell back, screamed and then threw up.

“It is awful,” she whispered. “It’s awful.”

He brought her out into the cloister courtyard, and set her down on a stone bench under the Linden trees. Then he went back inside, staring,

staring at the crucified on the cross. Dead, rotting, putrefied- and yet still alive! The victory was over the death of the physical body and its annihilation!

That's how it was now, right now, and yet different too. The waves carried the sailcloth, threw it lightly up and down. Wouldn't the seams break next! His work had been so botched and clumsy!

In his mind's eye he could see the corpse, see him through the cloth. He saw something that festered and baked, it rotted and stank. The ocean spit it out because it was so disgusting, and this putrid, this wretched decomposing cadaver still lived, lived like the mighty Christ of Colmar.

Only – what was it then? What was it? It grinned in the moonlight. It was no victory, no liberation of the spirit over death! No continuation of the rotting covering of flesh. Nothing pure and noble pushed out through the pus and decay. No prophet, No Messiah.

It was something that he could feel in the decomposition, something that swam in the sewage and stretched out in the slime of the rotting corpse. Something that reached out to him, pulled at him –

"Holy Virgin," he stammered. "Sweet Mother of God."

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They had lain at anchor before the Golden Gate for six days before the Paymaster died. The second officer had a large sheet of paper on the wall of his cabin with twenty-one squares on it, one for each day of the three weeks. Every night at midnight he would cross one off. Six had already been crossed off. Now he needed to make a new one. He was in despair that day and again two days later when the kitchen boy died.

"We will never leave!" He sighed. "Not with four sick over there and who knows how many more will get sick yet."

In his free time he sat together with the little assistant. They had a plan. As soon as the ship got out of quarantine they wanted to take the train to New York. Then take a Dutch or Swiss ship across the Atlantic. In six weeks they could be in Kiel. Only a little longer, just a little longer.

Five days passed and then another death. The three-week quarantine started all over again. The second sat in his cabin crying like a little girl.

"We will never leave, never!"

But the assistant was cunning, said nothing, sneaked around, and spoke to him again just before the boat came that brought the Harbor doctor. He now had the Paymaster's duty and was able to speak with the crew down at the gangway.

Late that night someone knocked lightly on Frank Braun's door. He opened it, the second stood there with the little assistant.

"Psst," the second said. "Quiet!"

Like two conspirators they came inside and shut the door behind them.

"We can go," whispered the little one. "I have bribed one of the crew. It cost me five pounds. He's coming in the morning with a boat!"

"Famous!" Frank Braun said.

"It is just –," the second hesitated. "You must help us. We don't want to steal away, to desert! You must speak with the Captain. Then he will permit it!"

Frank Braun was doubtful. "Do you really think so? He will be annoyed and it will be unpleasant when the Port Authorities find out."

"They won't find out," the assistant threw back at him. "They can't find out because they don't have a list. They don't know who is on board and who isn't. Just speak with the Captain. He can't refuse you! If he lets you go, then he will need to let us go as well."

"Alright, alright," said Frank Braun. "I will try."

He spoke with the Captain, did so as if the entire thing was his idea, as if he had chosen the two men to go with him. The Captain was not very agreeable. Was he really in that much of a hurry? If he went back now there was the highest probability that he would be shot dead by October or December.

That sounded so true to him that he didn't know how to answer. Did he really want to go back? In any case he knew what he did want – off the ship! If only he had a little patriotism! Only a little bit of what the other two had! But it wasn't there, none at all. All he could think was that the Captain was entirely correct. If he went back now he would get shot.

Finally he thought of something.

"Captain," he said. "If you had the possibility of going back to Germany today would you wait until tomorrow?"

The Captain looked straight at him. "No Sir, I would not. I would not wait!"

"Well then?" Frank Braun said.

The Captain shrugged his shoulders but gave his permission.

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The boat departed just as the moon set. They moved cheekily right through the middle of the harbor and no one stopped them. A coach picked them up, and took them to the train station where they needed to wait a couple of hours.

As the train rolled out of San Francisco the second cried, “Now we are free!”

The little assistant exalted, “Back to Germany! Long live the Kaiser!”

Frank Braun didn’t say anything.

Chapter Two: Beryls

“Deum testem invoco, si me Agustus, universo praesidens mundo, matrimonii honore dignaretur totumque mihi orbum confirmaret praesidendum: carius mihi et dignius videret, ut tua dici meretrix, quam illius imperatrix. “
–Epistolae Heloisiae

“The beryl is the color of the ocean and of the sky. It is the stone of St. Thomas who made a long sea voyage to India as an ambassador of God to preach to the unbelievers and believers.”
–Adreas, Biship of Casärea

Nevertheless, during those days as they crossed the continent, the resolution grew in him to return to Germany with the other two. This conviction was slow and gradual in forming but entirely certain and solid. It was simply the best thing that he could do.

The basis of his decision was entirely different from the other two. For them there was only one thing-Germany! Their Fatherland had been attacked tenfold by many countries. It would bleed to death and die if it could not defeat the enemy with its last bit of strength. They were part of Germany’s strength, both of them! They didn’t feel this as a duty they must perform but as something they must do for themselves.

They were a part of this mighty Germany and Germany was fighting and defending itself to the last drop of its blood. It must win or it must die. That was what they must do as well. To them there was no other way to think. Every German must feel the same way. They didn’t have the slightest doubt that Frank Braun felt it too – Fatherland – Germany – mother – with every breath, with every heartbeat just like they did.

He didn’t feel it that way at all. What he saw happening as he stood back in a detached way was every individual disappearing, dissolving into the mass, melting together with millions of others. Suddenly overnight a young, mighty, titanic being grew into existence, the people.

But he didn’t belong to it. Everything that he was, that he stood for was in constant war against it. Yes, he was only himself, an individual. The others? All the other people, the Germans, the masses, the folk, the

multitudes? It was a new life for them. They had been nothing and now this great hour had created them, created them as a small part of this giant body, yet as a part of it that lived, breathed and went to war.

But it would rob him of everything, would make him, like all the others, just a bit of dust, a miserable shred of bleeding meat in the body of the people. What meant life to others meant death to him, going back, submerging, disappearing, losing himself –No!

It was a matter of the soul and when the Fatherland called, the soul exulted loudly. It gave them high courage, perseverance, strength, gave them the will to win. His soul heard the message as well, heard it loud and clear. He saw it too, just like the others, all of them! But he remained cool and calm, not intoxicated, not following the reverberating call.

His body, yes, it wanted to go, his legs, belly and brain. His two thighs that could grip a horse, an eye sharp enough to hit the target, a fist that had often enough swung a gleaming saber. He understood affectionately, but in the end was indifferent as to why he should go there when he had just arrived here!

Surely they could make use of him. He was not new to war, had been in four or five of them. So what if they had only been monkey wars, revolutions in Mexico, in Haiti, Venezuela and Peru. It was still the same for the soldier there as it was in Europe. They were still shot with hot bullets, stabbed and cut with long knives.

In a way it had been even more barbaric, almost childlike, and not at all workmanlike. Today in Europe at least they were using science to carry out the great murder of people. Oh yes, he still wanted to be over there! Not out of patriotism but purely for the love of adventure.

He had dreamed of being in the South Sea in Samoa when the French ravaged Tripoli, had first heard of the great Balkan slaughter in Cashmere after it was all over. He had already missed two opportunities, this time he must be there. Yet it was not any different to him than if he were going to a foreign war and traveling with strangers. It was like that time in El Paso when he had tossed a silver dollar with a Texan cowboy. Heads or tails? For Pancho Villa or the usurper Huerta?

It was like that, only this time he had no choice of which side he should ride on. He thought it was a good enough reason and decided with certainty and conviction that he would fight for Germany and not against it. Still, it was scarcely more than a convenient justification, something inherited,

something from the way he was brought up that now guided him. It was like not wearing a stranger's shirt as long as his own was nearby.

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It was as they were leaving out of Salt Lake City, that a man sat there in front of him, three or four seats away. He sat there and spit, spit regularly every two minutes into a large brass spittoon. Not into the one right in front of him, he spit in an arch to a different one over two seats away and not once did he miss, always landing exactly in the middle of the target.

"An excellent spitter!" The second said.

The assistant crowed, " The fellow should be a submarine, his spit a torpedo and the spittoon an English cruiser."

Frank Braun stared at the stranger. He had not been there earlier, and must have just now gotten on at the train station or come in from a different car. Frank Braun stared at him. He resembled his uncle, the old Medical Councilor ten Brinken-resembled him to a hair.

He was a little man and quite ugly, smooth shaven, fat watery bags hung under his eyes with swollen lips and a huge meaty nose. The eyelid drooped heavily over the left eye but the right stood wide open, squinting out in a predatory manner.

Only his uncle didn't spit, he didn't do that. He drooled too; it ran here and there exactly like this man. It was not the Medical Councilor, most certainly not. He was dead, entirely and completely dead, had hung himself. It was three years now, thank God.

The second stood up.

"I'm going to the diner car," he declared. "I've seen some good Dago spitters in my life, but nothing so black as that, damn it all! But that doesn't bother me as much as the regularity. It makes me fidgety. I count to one hundred fifteen –then it patters in the basin! He doesn't move and I count all over again."

"Counting has always been your special joy!" The assistant laughed. "Are you going to chart it like you did the quarantine days?"

"You counted them too!" The second cried back at him.

His uncle sat there, still, silent and staring. He didn't read, didn't smoke, didn't move. He just spit.

Frank Braun counted the intervals, he broke it off at one hundred twenty three, then it was two seconds more and then four seconds less. Almost exactly two minutes he thought and counted again, counted four times, ten times, fourteen times.

Then the man stood up, glanced furtively, quickly across at them. A phlegmy, putrid smile crossed his hanging lips and at that moment Frank Braun believed that it most certainly was his uncle Jakob and no one else! But at the same time he equally resembled the dead Chinese that had floated to the surface and swam around the fever ship. But then he was once more his uncle, the Privy Medical Councilor ten Brinken. He put his head in his hands.

The assistant cried, “Thank God the pig is gone!”

Frank Braun looked up. Yes, the man was just going through the door into the next car.

“Funny,” he said. “That man looks just like my uncle.”

“Well then, your uncle is no great beauty, “ said the assistant.

Frank Braun said, “No, that he is not. I want to go after him.”

“Who?” asked the other.

“That man, the spitter,” Frank Braun stood up slowly and unsteadily. His voice rang harmoniously, “He looks exactly like the Chinese!”

The assistant pricked up his ears, “Like who? Who does he look like?”

“Like the Chinese,” answered Frank Braun. “Like the Chinese. You know, the one that died of fever and I sewed up. The one that floated to the top and swam around the ship.”

“Just a minute Doctor,” interrupted the little assistant. “Is it a little too warm in here for you? That fellow looks just like the Chinese and just like your uncle? Or was the Chinese also your uncle? Then I congratulate you! Go in there and drink a highball or something cold please. It will do you good.”

Frank Braun looked straight at him.

“He resembles both,” he stammered. “I must go after him.”

“It’s all right with me, “ laughed the assistant. “Then if you don’t mind, I will take your place until you come back. The sun is shining right in my face here. Greet your spitting Chinese uncle for me.”

Frank Braun scarcely heard. He thought, it’s a bright day – one o’clock in the afternoon and a bright, hot summer day. We are in the middle of the

United States, in a Union-Pacific Pullman car somewhere between Salt Lake City and Denver. It is a very bright day.

He saw the man in the next car standing there, almost as if he had been waiting for him. The man looked over at him, grinned and went further back. Frank Braun followed him. Through seven, through eight cars, until they got to the last one. It was empty, not a single passenger sat there. The man went through the car to the very last seat, turned around and sat there. Then he spit into the middle of a large finger bowl in front of him.

Frank Braun took a different seat a little distance away, stared across at the man and counted -one hundred nineteen, one hundred twenty, one hundred twenty one,. The basin didn't appear to be filled with water. It didn't patter when he spit. It gave a soft, light metallic tone almost like a chirp, like a whistle or squeak.

It flew entirely black through the air landing in the polished, scrubbed basin, pang-ping. Frank Braun stared at the basin, listening closely. It scraped, scratched and rubbed on the metal. It was as if something was running around inside it, something swift, quick, circling around in the basin.

One hundred eighteen- nineteen- twenty-The man pushed his thick lips together and it sprang through the air, black, entirely black and sprang into the middle of the round metal basin glistening in the sunlight, glowing like polished gold.

Pang-ping, it scraped lightly, ran quickly. Oh, it was alive, whatever the man was spitting. Frank Braun leaned forward, staring across to see more clearly. He saw a black head rise up out of the round basin, pointed little ears sticking straight up, little green eyes leering back at him. It got up on the rim, fell back, then sprang up again. It sat for a moment on the shiny gold in the sun, sprang down, and scurried under the seat.

He breathed out in relief. That's what it was, a small mouse had been hiding in the basin. It was in deathly fear of the dreadful hail coming from the strange man. That's all it was. It saved itself, the little thing. Thank God! He thought.

But it chirped again, scratched and scrabbled in the basin. There were still more of them in there, he thought, perhaps an entire nest of them. They came out, big ones and little ones, one after the other, sitting on the golden rim, leering into the world before springing down.

Then another and another, always more –many –many –

Once more the repulsive fellow pursed his lips, no, he didn't point them, he plumped them, formed them into a ball like a deformed bashful judge. He spit black, and this black moved in the air, and just before it landed in the basin it squeaked. Frank Braun heard it clearly, then again after two minutes and again two minutes later. The man was spitting black mice!

It was strange but didn't seem unnatural to him. He remembered a man he had seen once at a circus in Berlin and later again in Madrid. He had taken a large glass fishbowl of water with fish, salamanders and frogs swimming in it. The man had picked it up and drank all of it, even the contents, bent backwards, puffed up his cheeks and blew. A beautiful fountain sprang out of his mouth and the little golden, silver and green fishes, the salamanders and frogs, even a few tadpoles and fat leeches sprayed through the air. They landed wriggling on the floor and an assistant collected them all up and put them back into a fresh aquarium where they swam around once more in comfort.

In any case, it really looked as if they had been in the dark belly of the magician. Maybe that's how it was with this fellow in front of him. Perhaps he had mice trapped in his pocket, or an entire cigar box full of them, quickly putting an animal in his mouth when no one was looking, then spitting it out. Or else he had somehow ahead of time put a couple dozen deep in his belly and was now letting them back out one at a time. It was a trick, just a cheeky trick!

How he grinned, how he mockingly grinned! Then he stood up slowly and comfortably, formed his phlegmy lips into a funnel, inflated his cheeks and belly. They sprang out of his mouth like rockets, pushing out of his mouth, mice, mice, hundreds of black mice. They sprang onto the seat squeaking, squealing, running around over everything. Then somehow they all disappeared.

How the fellow grinned! He looked so much like the Medical Councilor!

Frank Braun opened his lips.

"Uncle Jakob!" He whispered.

He was thrown forward; something tore at his knees. He held onto the seat with his left hand, and leaned forward putting his right hand on the floor for support. He heard a hollow crash, then the shrill howling of the steam whistle.

The train was stopped. Something had happened. He sprang up, ran into the next car. He saw people mildly excited, a few were tearing open the windows and looking out. More were pressing back from the front of the train.

“What happened?” He cried.

No one knew. He pushed his way through a car full of people, nothing in the next car or the next. Then he saw what had happened, oh, nothing special. The watchman had been asleep at the crossing and not let the barrier down. Then, stupid coincidence! The train had hit a team of horses pulling a wagon. The two horses lay there in pieces, dying miserably. One was already dead. A passenger with a revolver mercifully shot the other one.

At the crash the teamster had been thrown in a high arc over the train landing on the other side. He rubbed his arms and legs, and felt himself all over. Everything was fine. He barely had a scratch. The train was all right as well, a few scratches on the varnish of a car. Only one windowpane was broken, the one the barrier had gone through. Only one windowpane was broken, and something else, something behind the window, the blonde skull of a passenger, now red with blood.

It was the little assistant that had been sitting in Frank Braun’s place. He was dead. They brought the corpse out, placed it in the baggage car. The delay scarcely lasted ten minutes, and then the whistle blew. But the train waited a little longer, just long enough to let another train go past that had caught up with them. Frank Braun looked over at it. There, sitting right by the window sat the repulsive man, the one that looked like his uncle Jakob. He spit out and a little black mouse ran over the rails.

* *
*

The ferry crept slowly and soundlessly over the Hudson like a giant turtle with a high arching shell. Frank Braun sat on top looking back at the quarrels and prongs of the Manhattan skyline that glowed feebly in the November sun.

The second sat next to him.

“You still want to go?” He asked the second.

The second only nodded, and looked contemptuously at him.

“I’m going,” he said.

Frank Braun picked up a newspaper off the table, “Read this! The *Bergensfjord* has brought five hundred and sixty German prisoners to Kirkenwall. That is the latest catch.”

The second shrugged his shoulders, “I’m still going”.

“Listen,” Frank Braun continued, “The *Potsdam* delivered over three thousand to the English, the *Helig Olav* delivered eight hundred, the *Nieuw Amsterdam* brought almost two thousand to the French at Brest. The *Frederick VIII* brought –”

The sailor interrupted him. “-and the *Konig Haakon* brought almost a thousand to Dover. The United States has delivered almost twice that many to Falmouth. I know, know all the numbers, the ones the Italians brought to Gibraltar. Over twenty thousand all together. I’m still going.”

He was quiet for a moment, gazing dreamily into the wake, “Maybe I’ll get lucky. The *Noordam* could still get through.”

“It could,” Frank Braun snapped with his tongue. “And tomorrow the world will joyfully announce that it is in Hull, England or Cherbourg, France!”

The other didn’t answer. They crossed over the mighty river in silence, watching all the steamers, tugs and ferryboats running here and there like giant water beetles. As they crossed into Hoboken, New Jersey, the sailor spoke again.

“When I’m here it almost feels like I’m back home. They are all German and they speak German.”

They went past the wide piers of Bremer Lloyd and Hopag. There lay the mighty ships, the largest in the world, still, idle, unmoving. They were bound for Germany. A flag extended itself over the side of the warehouse. The second stood at attention, raised his arm in salute.

“The Fatherland! There they are,” he cried. “Our ships!”

Frank Braun said, “Wait until they leave!”

But the second shook his head, “Try it on someone else doctor! There are more than enough Germans boarding the *Ryndam*. Tell them about it!

“That I will,” nodded Frank Braun and bit his lip. “That I will – depend on it! I’m done talking with you about it!”

They came to the pier of the Dutch ship. Thick throngs of people stood in the large warehouse, mostly blonde men, women and children. They cried, but they laughed and sang too. The two of them shoved through the

crowd up to the gangway that led onto the deck of the ship. The paymaster of the ship stood there. Frank Braun recognized him by his cap.

“How many passengers?” He asked.

“Don’t really know,” growled the Dutchman. “Two and a half thousand or more. Over crowded again! In cabins and between decks!”

“German?”

The Dutchman laughed, “Is there anything else? Austrians and Hungarians too! Maybe a half dozen neutral. Are you coming too?”

Frank Braun declined. “Do you believe that you can bring them across safely?”

The Dutchman nodded, “Everyone gets across safely, have no fear of that. We guarantee it, all the way to Falmouth! The English will be happy. We are bringing them new manpower and free labor!”

He didn’t stop to think for a moment. He clapped his hands as loud as he could, cried out, “Attention! Attention! Pay Attention!”

He swung his newspaper around high in the air. The people noticed.

“Quiet! One of them cried.

And another, “Listen up, he has news! Let him read!”

They called back over the crowds, “Quiet, Listen up! Let him read the telegram.”

They gathered around the steps below in the warehouse and above on deck by the railing. He began quickly, stuttering at first, uncertain.

A couple in back cried, “Louder!”

A portly man on board cried, “Is it something about General Kluck?”

“People, you shouldn’t leave,” screamed Frank Braun. “You shouldn’t leave with this damned Dutchman! None of you will get to Germany, no, not a single one of you! They will deliver you like herrings, twelve to the dozen, a hundred dozen to the ton! As soon as you leave Sandy Hook you will be prisoners, and will have paid good money for it! As soon as you are at sea you will be taken across to concentration camps! Do you know what they are? Concentration camps?”

Right in front of him someone laughed, a broad, bearded sailor.

“What’s the difference,” he cried. “Anything is better than staying here without work, without food! You Sir, can perhaps afford to stay here and wait, but I can’t, and the rest of us? Beggars if we stay here in the best case, or even thieves and criminals in the worst! I would rather be an honorable fellow and prisoner of war in an English concentration camp!”

“Sir, you don’t know what you are saying,” Frank Braun continued. “Here, everyone has a chance, over there, none! Here, at least everyone can try to find work, for themselves and for the Fatherland! In England he must work for the English! You don’t know what goes on in prison camps. You don’t, and not one of you others do! I know! I know very well from the Boer wars!

The men, women and children are all packed together like flies, mutually spreading plague and diseases! Many are healthy when they arrive but only a very few are healthy when they leave! People, don’t go on board. Stay where you are!”

A large man with a mustache leaned over the rail.

“Comrades,” he cried. “Comrades! What the gentleman said might all be true! But I am an officer, there are others here and reservists too, next of kin, all part of our glorious army! Over there our brothers, our fathers, our friends, living or dead have been fighting, and spilling their blood for their children, their wives and for the honor of the Fatherland! Do you want to be cowards and stay back here?

This morning I met with the General Consul, and spoke with him about this very thing the Gentleman has explained to you. I asked him what could be done. The General Consul, the representative of our Country, told me that it was the duty of every German to get back home the quickest and best way they could so they could bless the Fatherland with their service! Each and every one of you knows this already.

Is there any other way for us to get back to Germany? This is what the Consul wants! ‘Will we get through?’ I asked the Consul and he answered:

‘That is in the hands of God! Follow your conscience and do your duty!’

Comrades! Isn’t that what we all want to do? Isn’t that why we are all here? Whatever happens, we will have done our duty, our proud duty as German men!”

They cried, they shouted with joy and yelled, “We love Germany! We love the Kaiser!”

Frank Braun drummed his fingers on the railing of the gangway. He waited impatiently and nervously for the crowd to become a little quieter. Then he started anew.

“People,” he cried, “People, people-”

But he couldn’t get through until the officer above him provided quiet for him to talk.

“Comrades! Let him speak in peace! He means well – most certainly! Only he doesn’t understand that there is something that stands above personal freedom and survival – Love of the Fatherland and of Honor! Let him speak in peace comrades!

They cried out again in light enthusiasm but quieted at a signal from their commander. Frank Braun called out to them shaking in rage.

“People, the General Consul is a stuffed sausage! He is a word twister and a fool that doesn’t know where God lives! Worse yet, he is a bureaucratic criminal –”

“Enough,” they cried. “Enough! Shut up!”

They bellowed, “Seize him, get that fellow!”

But he wouldn’t give up, his voice grew higher, screaming clearly above the noise of the crowd, skipping, galloping ever further, springing and clattering over any trenches and hurdles that tried to stop it.

“The Consul is a criminal! A scoundrel of stupidity! He alone has delivered on a plate more prisoners to England and France than the French general Joffre and his entire French army put together!

Our brothers must capture as many English in return just to get you back and that will cost streams of German blood! The Allies are not that dumb, they won’t send you back to Germany on neutral ships!

No calf, no sheep, is so stupid, that it runs willingly up to the butcher, “Here I am, please butcher me!”

“People, don’t go! Don’t follow your thick mutton headed General Consul! Stay where –”

“Comrades! Comrades!” The Commander’s voice roared like marching music through the wide warehouse.

“Don’t you think that is enough! The Gentleman called the Kaiser’s representative a muttonhead, a stuffed sausage, a scoundrel and a criminal! He called you cattle and stupid sheep! I, myself, let him speak, but our German patience has its limits!

If God is willing we will all get home safely, comrades, and that is why I for one, am going!”

“I’m going too,” they screamed. I’m going too! We will all go!”

A voice intoned: “Germany, Germany over all!”

And they sang, a thousand voices strong.

Frank Braun gnawed his lip. Slowly he went back down the gangway. The Dutch paymaster grabbed his arm and pulled him back a few steps under the gangway.

"It's safer here," he said belly laughing. "Most certainly!"

Frank Braun stood there quietly near the Dutchman and the second as the crowd sang:

"Hail to the Conqueror" and "God Receive us".

They were still singing when the last bell sounded for boarding. That's when they began singing in rapture, "The Watch on the Rhine".

Long lines filed over the gangway, waving back at the women and children.

"Were you ever in Chicago?" The Dutchman asked. "At Armours?"

Frank Braun nodded.

"That's exactly how the sheep press over the bridge as they go to the slaughterhouse," the other continued. "– and the cattle and the swine. Exactly like that.

I tell you Sir, all the men there, every single one of them, asked when they purchased their ticket in our office:

'Are you sure you can get us to Rotterdam?'

And the red haired girl, Levinne, answered every single one of them, 'Am I a prophet?'

But they still paid and they still came anyway! Exactly like last time when we brought almost three thousand to the English at Falmouth."

The second looked at him, broke his silence. "You are right, you are most certainly right. But you are a Dutchman, and would never understand what goes on today in the German breast."

He turned halfway around, stuck out his right hand.

"Live well doctor. I'm going on board."

Frank Braun shook his hand without a word. Above him on the gangway someone cried,

"There he is! The fellow's been hiding!"

He looked up at the same moment that someone swung a walking stick hitting him on the head.

"Take that," the man cried. "As a souvenir, and another."

But the second grabbed the stick, rescuing him and breaking it in the blink of an eye.

The man above on the gangway screamed, “Shame on you! You must be drunk! Bring him up here!”

Everything happened so fast that Frank Braun had no time to see who had really hit him. The Dutchman took his hat off and felt through his hair.

“Nothing serious,” he laughed. “Just a little bump! For the Fatherland!”

Frank Braun went up, and stood right next to the gangway, big and tall, right where everyone could see him! Let someone else come at him with a walking stick. He looked out at the people, almost challenging them. But no one paid any attention to him.

Now dusk sank through the warehouse, the few arc lamps were already throwing their scanty light. And more came, still more, always more. He stared into the mass of humanity, saw one after the other, heard their last words. He forgot about the blow. He dearly wanted to go out to every single one of them.

“Don’t go! I beg of you, don’t go!”

His lips whispered incessantly. But no one stayed, not a single one.

One, a large man, took his sleeping child out of the arms of his wife, kissed it lightly.

“I will bring it back for you,” he said. “I swear to you, son, I will bring the Iron Cross back for you! I have inherited two already, one from my father and one from my grandfather! You shall have three of them, son!”

But his wife sobbed, “Just come back to us!”

Another, a youth, kissed his New York girl.

“Live well, Fay,” he laughed. “Be true to me if you can, but just in case, promise me, never take an Englishman!”

“Farewell,” she wept. “Farewell, my love!”

Another, a strong bull necked man, staggered drunkenly over the gangway, entirely alone. His hand clenched the rail as he babbled.

“Two brothers, two of my brothers have been shot dead already! Two of them! Four are still over there. I am the seventh. Just wait France! Two brothers –”

No one heard him.

Then another, and another, and still another.

Ten men filed past in tight formation, their canes shouldered like weapons. Their brothers in song stood down below singing the farewell song:

“In the homeland, in the homeland, we will meet again in –”

A portly grey bearded man pushed past, hit him with his elbow, and excused himself. Frank Braun recognized him. It was the German professor at Columbia University. A black, red and gold ribbon shone over his mighty belly.

"Are you going too?" He asked the professor.

"No," said the elder. "Good God, if only I could go! But at sixty-three there's not a recruiter that would take me! There, I'm sending my two boys and my daughter too. She's joining the Red Cross!"

"Professor," he urged. "Professor, listen –"

But the elder didn't listen. He slugged his two sons in the arm, and kissed his daughter.

"Children," he said. "As your father I want to tell you something. I swear this on these colors you gave me. At this moment I am so very proud of you, and even more, I will be even prouder every day! God bless you!"

You could scarcely understand him. Everywhere there was shouting and noise, crying and sobbing between the shrill screams of the steam whistle. Over everything hung the sounds of singing that would not stop, over and over, one verse after another, one song after another:

"Beloved Fatherland" and "May there be peace".

The cable fell and the anchor creaked up out of the water. They pushed away from the gangway, and closed the railing. Slowly the *Ryndam* moved away. In a moment he was standing alone. All the ones left behind hurried to the end of the pier. As the steamer passed by they could get one final glimpse, could wave their shawls, sing, and cry out one final "Good Bye".

Already the band, like always, was playing the departure song, "Must I then, must I then go out from the city – out from the city."

He looked over at the Hudson, saw the *Ryndam* there.

His lips murmured, There they go, there they go."

And he was ashamed that he was not on board as well. Then suddenly an old song from Bewerland came to him.

"He came a swimming in a piss pot.
Down the Rhine dressed in Bridal finery
When he finally arrived at Rotterdam
He spoke: Young Lady, may I court you?"

He laughed bitterly. God knows, that was how it was now! They were all dressed in their finery like the song of the mouse prince and they were all traveling to their beloved bride, which they call the Fatherland! They wanted to go to Rotterdam like the mouse prince only he was lucky. In spite of his many strange journeys he did arrive at the city.

But these, these two thousand rats. They would never arrive, their piss pot, their damned Dutch pot was really just a giant rattrap!

He jumped; a hand lay lightly on his shoulder. It was tall Tewes, the reporter from the *German Herald*.

"Doctor," he crowed. "That was, so to say, a very wild goose chase!"

Frank Braun only nodded, but didn't answer.

"I tried to tell them too," continued the other. "I've been here every time, and seen seventeen ships leave since last August. It's always the same, nothing helps."

He waited for a moment, and then spoke again when he didn't get an answer.

"Anyway, you speak very well. You have the stuff for it and the name as well. You must help us – for the German cause!"

"What must I do?" Frank Braun whispered.

"Come, come," the journalist patted his jacket arm benevolently. "We need you Doctor, need you! You say it like it is and you can talk the little phrases, the explosive, beautiful little phrases just like the major did a short while ago. Those are what move the masses! Words that everyone knows, that every child can learn by heart!

All the society speakers can do it over here. You should see how the words flow! But what they can't do, what the major can't do, is put a clever thought in here and there, in-between, something new, something for the people of culture. They are as important to us as the masses are, believe me! They must be given something as well so they are not broken down by the perpetual sameness, the monotony of black, white, red and the need of the people, of German pride, Kaiser and Reich, for the honor of Bismarck and such beautiful things."

He took Frank Braun under the arm, went out and down with him, telling him all about it continuously. He must help, it was his duty. He couldn't allow himself to become depressed in these days. Yes, he knew how the German customs were insulted and spit at every day in this

country. You had to unite with others to protect yourself. The Committee of German Workers was now solidly established. He must join it!

Frank Braun heard all this, but only vaguely and it appeared to him as if the tall reporter wasn't speaking to him at all, was speaking to some third person somewhere else instead.

"Yes, yes," he said lightly.

The journalist got heated up.

"Would you stand for it?" he whistled. "I won't! At least make an attempt! Go on Strike! Don't work! Make a difference! It's going well, we incite workers all over the country! I'll tell you ahead of time it's no pleasure – but you must, you must!"

He interrupted himself, stopped, and grabbed his jacket lapel.

"Tell me doctor," he cried. "Would you have left today if you were even halfway certain the possibility existed that you would have arrived in Germany?"

Frank Braun thought, "That's almost exactly what I asked the Captain!"

The reporter didn't let him answer, "There you have it! Now see this! You can accomplish more for Germany right here, ten times more, ten thousand times more, than if you were over there lying in some dirty hole! Isn't it true, doctor, that you will try to be in Baltimore this Sunday for German day?"

He nodded, "Yes, yes – "

The journalist pulled out a notebook, "Your address please? And telephone number?"

He snapped the book shut and shoved it back into his pocket. Sounding very satisfied he said:

"Now that was exhausting. You will hear from me doctor. I will share all the important news with you. I will call you up tomorrow."

He turned to go, then turned back quickly, "I almost forgot. A lady is waiting for you, wants to speak with you. She is an old acquaintance."

"Who is she?" He asked.

"It is Frau Van Ness," said the tall man. "Come on, come on!"

He grabbed his arm. Frank Braun pulled back.

"I don't know her," he said. "I've never heard of her!"

"But she knows you, Doctor. Just come along!" Insisted the reporter. "She is the one that gave me the idea to recruit you for our cause! Come on,

come on. I'm in a hurry. I need to write my report."

He pulled him along. A lady stood there, slim, and mid sized, in deep black. A long mourning veil fell over her face.

"Here he is," said the tall Tewes and he introduced her. "This is Frau VanNess!"

Then he turned quickly, "And now if you will excuse me. I really have no more time."

He sprang through the empty warehouse in long strides. The lady threw back her veil; reddish brown hair glowed over her green eyes.

"No, no," He thought. "She shouldn't be wearing black!"

Then he recognized her. She was Lotto Lewi from the zoo.

He said, "Frau Lotte – ?"

She laughed, "Frau – always so formal, Frau?"

"Then Lotte," he corrected. "Lotte, if you like. When was the last time we saw each other?"

"In Venice," she said. "It was six years ago. I was walking in the marketplace when I met you again. You said:

'Lotte Lewi, the Phoenician! Red haired, green eyed with thin black stripes all over. As thin as the Goddess Baaltis and you color your nails with henna. you are the maiden of desire, you know every sin and constantly lust for new ones. You belong at the zoo, best half breed – must wear belladonna in your hair.'

"You remember exactly what I said?" He asked.

She nodded lightly, "What you said and what I said- and what happened- We had one day and one night together."

He asked quickly, "Are you in mourning?"

She laughed. She knew very well why he was trying to change the subject.

Quietly she said, "Why? Do you believe that I have let go of you?"

That raised his lips and freedom rang in his laugh, "You too? First that reporter cornered me. Do you think that anyone can just take me if and when they desire?"

She became serious. "Yes, I do believe it," she said quietly. "Anyone can take you, anyone that wants to and tries. Once I thought you were not even a man, just a stringed instrument that somehow looked like a living person. Everything that wants you takes you and plays with you, people,

things, and thoughts! You, Frank Braun, are always just the puppet in your tragicomedies!”

He scoffed, “And now you want to pull my strings again Lotte? You must know that I at least still have a will.”

“Which is?” She asked.

“To run away,” he came back at her.

Then she nodded, “Oh, yes. That is perhaps the best thing for you, for you and for everyone else. That’s how you stay so young!”

“Like you, Lotte!” He shot back.

She sighed, “You think so? I am thirty now. Nevertheless, I know that I have never looked better. When I was fifteen, when you seduced me, or no, when I forced you to seduce me, I was not this beautiful. When I took you again at nineteen and even that last time in Venice I was not this beautiful. I know. I am more beautiful now because –”

He interrupted her, “Our love affair is old, Lotte.”

She looked at him quietly, “You mean our friendship! Old enough – sixteen years now! But our love affair? Let me count – An afternoon in Berlin, later, five days on our Easter vacation, and then in Venice, one day and one night – Eight days then, if you round it off.”

She didn’t look away, but he didn’t reply. His eyes wandered through the wide warehouse.

She sighed lightly, “We are the last ones here, let’s go.”

They went a few steps quietly walking near each other. Then she began again.

“Didn’t you ask why I was in mourning?”

“Yes,” he said. “Is your father dead? Or your mother?”

“Father died three years ago, “ she replied. “A stroke. The Privy Councilor had a beautiful burial, full of pomp and very Christian, just what mother wanted. Then she left Berlin, Now she’s living in Thuringia with her father, the old Baron Kubeck.”

“You’re still mourning after three years?” He asked.

She said, “According to father’s will I married an American shortly before his death – in Baumwolle – He was a business friend of fathers, even richer than father was. He died – It’s been six weeks now.”

“I’m, I’m sor – “ He tried but couldn’t say it.

It’s all right my friend,” she nodded and they went a few more steps in silence.

“That time,” he began. “You said you were engaged to some Baron. That time in Venice. Wasn’t that right?”

A small flicker of joy swept over her face, “Oh, you remembered! Yes, mother was in favor of it but father was very against it. I believe at the end he would have been more sympathetic if I had married you!”

“And you?” He asked.

“Me?” She laughed. “Me as well, you already know that. But you were gone the next day! And at that time I was still a little proud – or stupid, take it anyway you want. Instead of seeking you out – I screamed just like the other times. Then the Yankee came Father pressed me, just like mother with her handsome Baron! This one or that one. It didn’t matter to me. I depended on Papa’s money so I became Frau VanNess.”

She stepped out of the warehouse, raised her umbrella, waved to her chauffeur. The auto pulled forward. He opened the door for her.

“Goodbye,” he said.

She laughed lightly, “No,” she cried. “No, not this time! Climb in!”

He hesitated.

She raised her voice, “Climb in,” she commanded.

“Lotte,” he said and his words rang out very weakly. “Lotte, haven’t the two of us fought enough?”

And she answered, “And weren’t you always the winner? It’s true! But today I know you Frank Braun, know you better than you know me, better than you know yourself!”

“And today you think you can win. Is that it, Lotte?” He asked.

“Today – yes,” she said firmly. “Right now in this hour! Where will you go? What will you do? I will be at your apartment tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. You will give in sometime, you know you will!”

He bit his lip.

“Tell me I’m right!” She cried.

“Perhaps,” he gulped.

“You will,” she said. “And because you feel that way – that’s why I’m stronger than you. Now! Climb in!”

He climbed into the auto and she followed. She sat next to him and shut the door. Then she lowered her veil.

“Back home,” she commanded.

Chapter 3: Carnelians

Carnelian is a talisman, believed to bring luck and health. It drives away everything evil, protects you and protects the home.
–Goethe, West Orient Divan.

Those that have a weak voice and stutter when speaking should have a carnelian. It will give them the needed courage so they can speak freely and easily.
–Lapidario del Rey Don Alfonso X.

And yet it was no victory for Lotte Lewi.

Not that he played Joseph during this time, oh no! He always did what she wanted, was obedient and pliable like a well-behaved child.

“Kiss me,” she said, and he kissed her.

Only –he was so tired.

He sat at the table with her and forgot to eat.

“Eat!” She said –then he would take a couple bites. “Now drink!” She said –then he would empty his glass.

He sat on the sofa next to her and she took his hand.

“Speak,” she said, “talk to me.”

Then he talked to her, regular as clockwork, calmly and quietly. But suddenly he became quiet.

“What is it?” she asked.

But he didn’t know, had long forgotten what he had even been saying. She looked at him, slowly, attentively.

“It was something –” she murmured. “Think back.”

He obeyed immediately, thought back, strained. But he couldn’t remember.

He said, “I don’t know, dear –”

He hesitated –what was her name? She noticed it immediately.

“Don’t you know who I am?” she pressed.

Then it occurred to him. “Yes, yes!” he cried. “Lotte Lewi!”

She shook her head thoughtfully and looked very serious. He laughed at her.

“It is certainly nothing special. –I’ve just been a little tired –now and then –these last few days.”

“Have you slept?” she asked.

No, no –he hadn’t slept. Not recently –and he didn’t feel tired that way. Yes –it was really strange –this tiredness did not make him feel sleepy. Often it was exactly the opposite, even when he had slept long, deeply and solidly –at nights or even during the day –that was especially when he felt so dull and worn out.

Then what was it? He jumped up, took a couple of strides through the room, set his legs and slowly raised his arm. He felt all of his muscles –they were as hard and strong as always. He stepped in front of the mirror and laughed. Then almost immediately –he staggered. His body was seized by a light dizziness even though his brain remained completely clear.

He grabbed onto the back of a chair for support. He looked in the mirror, studied himself, and looked at all his features. There was nothing different, nothing. Everything was familiar, like it had been for several years now. It was exactly the same and there were no changes.

And yet there was something strange. –only what was it? He went back to the sofa.

Then she spoke, “You are sick.”

He shrugged his shoulders, “Nonsense, Lotte.”

“Just wait!” she said.

She sighed lightly, “You –I will not be your lover tonight. Not tonight. Not tomorrow – and who knows when. You are sick Frank Braun, so I will be your mother.”

He felt the need to reply with a stabbing joke, some scornful cheekiness, a hateful whip blow that would rebuke her love. That’s how it should have been. But his voice sounded weak and not cutting at all.

He spoke –and it was more of a sob – “Lotte, you –you –something is wrong with me. Something –there is something I need. Oh –how I crave after it!”

“Crave after what?” she asked.

Tonelessly –almost despairingly, “I don’t know what it is.”

Then the woman spoke, “I will find it dear boy.”

* *
*

He sat in his hotel room in Baltimore. In front of him stood the editor of **The Herald**. The editor was holding his manuscript and correcting it.

"No, no, that doesn't work," he said. "There, you must make it bang! Short, powerful, just a phrase! You say: 'A true German forever!' That has bang!"

Frank Braun opined, "We already have 'A true German' three times already."

"So much the better!" cried the journalist. "Then they will get it!"

Down below on the street the flags waved. The Stars and Stripes were everywhere, hanging from every window and on all the balconies. Giant striped banners stretched across the street. The people were pressed tightly together.

"Why are there no black, white and red flag's for German Day?" he asked.

"German Day?" The tall Tewes laughed. "Baltimore is celebrating the national anthem, 'The Star-Spangled Banner' –it's 100 years old today –and its poor phrases have certainly not gotten any better in that time. But here it is considered the highest poetry! The festival of the flags lasts an entire week long –German Day is only one of them."

The parade came, one hundred polished autos, then another hundred. There were women in Roman chariots dressed as amazons, wagons with giant beer kegs, with houses, paper dragons, and all possible things. It was like a carnival in Cologne, only much more tasteless, smaller, unorganized and unspeakably silly.

"What am I doing here?" he thought.

The editor clapped him on the shoulder and gave the manuscript back. "There, that's as good as it gets! Read it through a couple of times. Now come, it is time."

They climbed into the auto, drove through the city and then out toward the ocean. A mighty amusement park was there complete with merry-go-round's, theatrical performances, swings and a beer garden. That's where they climbed out.

"An amusement park!" said Frank Braun. "I'm supposed to talk here?"

The editor nodded, "Really!"

He led him through the people, up onto a large musical platform. There sat the committee –two dozen heavy men in hot jackets. And in the background stood the glee club, a couple more hundred dressed up people. The editor had placed him second or third to speak.

“You’re coming right up!” said one of them. “It’s starting.” You need to sit up front, right on the edge of the stage.

Frank Braun looked down. There stood the people –men, women and children –crowded tightly together. People, and more people in the broad plaza –it was almost unimaginable.

“How many are there?” he asked. “There must be at least six thousand!”

The journalist laughed, “Six thousand? That’s what you think! There is a good forty thousand pressed together out there.”

He was supposed to speak here? Here? –In front of a couple hundred people, yes; in front of a thousand, or perhaps even two thousand –but in front of this mighty mass of people? And in the open –only from the platform! He grabbed his manuscript –he couldn’t remember a single syllable of it. Then he smiled, it didn’t matter –no one would be able to understand him anyway!

Then a giant hammer fell three times upon an iron anvil. Pastor Hufner, the chairman of German day, swung it. His mighty voice resounded sonorously and full over the giant garden. It rang like a deep bell. He spoke only a few words, and then, together with the thousands, the Lord’s Prayer.

“They understand him!” thought Frank Braun. “He understands them!”

The pastor introduced the first speaker, a senator from Missouri.

“Pay attention,” whispered the journalist. “There is a genuine politician –he knows what to do! Observe his technique.”

The American began with Demagogic chatter, flattering nonsense for the folk, in order to capture the voice of the German beast, then a joke, a fat crude resounding joke, ancient –the crowd laughed and applauded. He swung his long arms in the air and stepped back and forth on the platform with large strides. He would spit one sentence out –loud, booming. It didn’t ring like a bell as the pastors did –it was more like the quick blow of a hammer. Then a pause, broad, drawn out, much longer than his entire sentence.

Then again, from out of full lungs, ten, twelve howling words, and again a pause.

So that's how it goes, thought Frank Braun. He attempted to read his manuscript, but couldn't see a single word. He only saw –black and again more black –those masses of people, those overwhelming, endless, masses of people and the trees behind them, large naked trees – and the giant shape of the Russian Ferris wheel.

"I can't do it!" he whispered. He looked around him –couldn't he just stand up, and quietly disappear –hide behind the choir?

But the editor held his jacket. Again the hammer like voice boomed, again –and yet again. It beat applause and laughter out of the black earth of folk with mighty blows. Then it became quiet –raised itself again –boomed down –

Then another joke –broad, crude –older than any of them. Everyone knew it –that's why they all laughed. The American wiped the sweat from his brow, and then waved his handkerchief, thanking the crowd for the loud applause.

"Now you are up," cried the journalist.

He trembled.

"No, no," he whispered, you tell them –"

Then the hammer fell, the one of iron. And far out over the plaza rang the full, bell like voice of the pastor… What did he say? A guest –a German from Germany –a celebrity –a very famous –a demigod –a –

Who was he speaking of? Of him, Frank Braun? That's how someone might introduce Bismarck –Goethe –Beethoven –

"Bravo!" said the journalist. "That's what you call an introduction!"

Frank Braun hissed, "What he is saying is nonsense. None of them even know my name, not one of them!"

"Naturally not!" laughed the journalist. "Not yours –and not anyone else's! What does it matter? –Not even his –but right now he has given them a mouthful! And done it so splendidly!"

The pastor stepped over to him, grabbed his hand and pulled him up.

"And here he is, my German brothers, here he is!"

There he stood before the applauding masses, alone in front of forty thousand. He trembled in agitation, and burned bright red in embarrassment. He bit his lips, gulped and choked –

Bang, bang, the iron hammer fell –the crowd fell silent. Quiet, breathless –forty thousand people. All color left him. He became pale and

white, and stood there, rooted to the spot, staring and motionless, unable to even move.

“Start talking!” whispered the editor.

He didn’t comprehend, what was he supposed to say? Him? What could he say?

“Read it!” the voice sounded again. “Take your manuscript!”

Yes, that was in his hand. He felt it tightly clenched between his fingers. He lifted up his hand, unfolded the paper and looked at it, but only instinctively, almost without consciousness.

Of this terrible time –there was something about that. About the homeland –about the needs of the war. About here –about the dead and dying. And about –how they should give –give –give –for their brothers over there –give.

Nothing made sense to him, nothing. There was only that one word; it was all he could see –

He cried –stood there –crying –

“You are starting to go crazy!” he whispered.

He tore his arm back down, closed his eyes, crumpled the paper –threw it away, pulled his lungs deep full of air and then suddenly he screamed out:

“Speak? –Speak to you –so you can laugh in these days! –you should be crying, men and women, crying and crying!” Something carried him; something raised him high into the air. Something carried him away to the mountain top; let him sing out loud into the black valley of people. He sang of Germany and of its mighty struggle, sang of victories and of heroic deaths. He sang, sang of great deaths and the needs of the Homeland, sang, sang to them of a mighty will, of the will, of the deed and the raging fire.

He sang –he felt nothing –he saw nothing –didn’t even know he existed. There was only a voice he heard. He –he was the voice. He was only a voice –and nothing else. Then it was quiet. Nothing. No word. Not the slightest sound. That amazed him. Then someone spoke again. Spoke –him! Was it him? He twitched. He was hot, very hot. He was back on earth, standing there on the stage. And he had spoken –just now –something. That was entirely certain.

Then –from down below –a sobbing and there was crying behind him. What was going on?

They were crying, crying. Forty thousand people were crying. But why? He stood there again, motionless and unmoving. Only, he was hot,

boiling hot. But now they shouted, clapped and cheered.

“Bow!” cried the editor.

He nodded awkwardly, but stood helpless in all the jubilation. Then the gentlemen came up and took his hands. The pastor held his right and the editor his left.

The editor said, “That was like a rocket –like a sky high rocket!”

And the pastor spoke, “That was very beautiful, what you said, about the tears, how they should be crying! Turn them into pearls –into pearls and jewelry and gold and money! And that they should give –today –for the need of the homeland.”

He murmured, “I said that?”

The pastor swung his hammer. –He understood very well what to say now. Everyone should march past the bandstand, should bring their offering for Germany –whatever they could. Then someone gave him a coat.

“Put this on,” cried a gentleman. “You are entirely soaked.”

He felt himself –oh, he was wet alright, not only his shirt and underclothes –also his vest, jacket and trousers.

“Dripping wet!” laughed the journalist. “Better than a sauna! You must have lost at least four pounds!”

He pulled on the coat and thanked him. Another brought a large tablecloth; four gentlemen each took one corner of it. They climbed down the stairs and held it up –in front of the pastor and Frank Braun. The music began, and the choir sang, one hundred and twenty men’s voices. Then they came up –by the thousands.

“May I go?” he asked.

“No, no!” cried the editor. “You are needed here very much. This is the main thing.”

The people threw coins into the cloth –and many dollar bills. There were rings, brooches and watches. Many gave full purses –pulled stick pins out of their ties, took off their earrings. He saw a little girl throw in her ball and –saw a waitress tear a golden buckle off her dress –

And him, they shook his hand. –At first he returned the handshake, shook back, but his hand to begin to hurt.

“Don’t squeeze,” the journalist advised. “Just hold their fingers.”

The cloth was full –they brought a new one. Again the gold pieces sounded –and watches and rings –

And again he shook hands, dark fists and red ones, sweaty and very dirty. Also –once in awhile –a clean and soft one –

His hand started to swell up –but he kept shaking it. He thought, “Do I have to shake all of their hands? All of them?”

He forced himself. Over there across the ocean they lay in trenches. –He –he –only needed to shake hands. His hand –German hands, German –like his hand. But it didn’t help. It disgusted him –nevertheless!

Why was he doing it then? He thought, what was going on with him?

Clink, clink –it fell into the cloth –and again, clink!

“That is your money,” laughed the pastor. “You alone made it! There is over $100,000 – and that’s just counting the money!”

He was happy. Oh yes! But still he was thinking, “What’s going on with me!”

Now he shook hands with his left –until it hurt, swelled up like the right. Then he changed back –right –left –

And more always came –always still more. He closed his eyes –

* *
*

Whatever she wanted he did, without any will of his own. He didn’t live with Frau Van Ness –but he was always there. Only seldom –scarcely once a day –did he go back to his house –to change clothes or to get something. He lay around for days on her sofa and chairs, read a little, and chatted with her. Or just sat, still, deeply depressed –staring straight in front of him. –But he did not dream.

He was her child –for days. She cared for him, doctored him.

At nights he was her lover. Lay by her –let her kiss him and kissed her as well. He looked healthy, strong and glowing. He laughed when he stood beside her in front of the large mirror. She –white, so white and scarcely a couple spots of color: on top was her red hair –then the red nipples of her child like breasts, and the other places, paint on her fingernails –and a little red on her lips –and on her nostrils and earlobes. And he –he was brown over his entire body –still held the tan of the tropic sun.

He lifted her up –she was so fragile. He –was strong, and yet he felt –even paler than she was under his brown skin, much, much paler.

And, she was stronger than him –she was. For the meantime, he was the woman. She –she was the man. She was.

She watched him patiently, for days and nights. Still, even in her embrace, he felt that something was lurking around inside of him and lying in wait.

“Will you be able to forget now?” he spoke. “After this?”

She asked, “Forget what?”

“What?” he came back. “You, me, everything!”

She looked straight at him, kissed him.

“Oh yes,” she answered. “When you are healthy again, Frank Braun.”

She had doctors come, one after the other; had him examined, four times, five times. His heart and lungs –and nerves –everything.

They said that he was healthy, strong, and powerful. Nothing was wrong with him, nothing at all. This tiredness –this apathy –was only from some little weakness of the nerves –

He needed to be more careful about what he ate, and not smoke so many cigarettes. But Lotte Van Ness shook her head.

“I will find it,” she stated.

* *
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That night he ran through the streets.

He woke up in the wide bed next to her. But he felt different than usual, not tired –fresh, oh so fresh! Only –he was afraid –felt a great fear and he immediately knew why. It was a fear of the woman lying there beside him.

He sat on the edge of the bed for just a moment, reached for his socks and shirt, searched for his trousers and dressed himself. One thing was certain, he had to leave.

His lips stuck together –he wiped them on the sleeve of his shirt –there was a little blood there. Was it from out of his throat –from out of his lungs? Was he that sick?

But he felt so young, especially now.

He stepped in front of the mirror, pulled on his vest and jacket. From the bed behind him came a whining, almost a sobbing. But it was so faint, so very faint. She was certainly asleep, crying in her sleep.

He didn’t go back, didn’t kiss her. He hurried out of the room, went down to the landing, opened the house door and went outside.

He breathed, freedom! He didn’t know anything, but he felt that he had been sick, and that now he was –quite suddenly –healthy. And he felt, that it all had something to do with this woman – with Lotte Van Ness.

She held him solidly, she alone. And it had become worse and worse since he had been with her. It had been like something inside him was withering.

He was her puppet, her plaything.

Then something occurred to him. Lotte Lewi, even as a child at the time, while only fifteen years old had still yearned after all forms of wild, erotic pleasures, like a clever, beautiful –and oh so experienced, woman of the world. And yet she had been a child –innocent and pure. And now, Lotte Van Ness –thirty years old –was just as sensuous and still yearning for erotic pleasures and fantasies –still had child like breasts and a child’s soul.

She ate him up, she sucked him out –yes that’s what she did. But she did it like a charming little girl, that was so cheerful and happily licking her sucker.

He was her sucker.

He liked that; he laughed. He was a sucker all right, really, sweet and a little sour and bitter at the same time. Not boring, absolutely not –he was such a great treat for a spoiled child’s tongue. But he was more than that. He was a miracle sucker, a large, thick one like he had always wanted when he was a little boy. One that you licked and sucked, until it became smaller and then very small –and then, suddenly, it was large again and thick like before. He was one like that –when he was almost gone, when he was almost used up in the kisses of this woman, then suddenly he was thick and large again, and sticking out of Lotte’s childish little mouth.

Joyously he breathed in the freedom and ran across Broadway into the night.

It was dirty, very dirty. There were paper scraps everywhere that were dancing in the wind. He went across the highway –and stubbed his foot on a dead dog. Oh yes, he was in New York; in no other city of the world would a dead animal lay on the street that long. Perhaps there were stars above –who really knew. You couldn’t look high enough to see over the twenty, forty and sixty story buildings that towered on both sides. They were just concrete buildings, ugly and dirty –with people scurrying around

underneath them. Over the ground –which they called asphalt in this city, was stone, asphalt –wood, lots of wood, iron and glass. Everything was all mixed up with everything else, senseless and pointless with nothing that especially drew the eye. There was nothing smooth, only enormous boils –over everything, cement boils over broken ground, like pus filled sores. There were tears and holes as well –New York was like the skin of a leper.

The dirty streets were empty. Only a drunkard staggered here and there –and then, an Irish policeman, whistling. On the corner was a beggar. Not one by trade like in Andalusia, not one that made a living at it and was happy. It was one that was really in need, freezing and pale, with blue lips and glassy eyes.

He cried out, “I’ve been looking for work for months. I can’t find any. I am starving.”

Oh yes, there are ten thousand freezing, starving beggars on the leper’s skin of this city. Or they are already frozen –it was the same thing, like the dead dog. Both were correct –one way or the other –they would be dead.

He was no beggar. He gave, gave, throughout his entire life. He gave to everyone that came, all of them –his little bit of money –and his heart’s blood and his soul. But him? Really, who gave to him?

What did it matter –that he was not rich? They could take whatever they wanted, devour and suck! Today he felt good. He was a magical sucker and tonight he had not been licked small!

* *
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He got up early, bathed, pulled on his kimono and rang for his tea. Then he grabbed the telephone and dialed.

“I am healthy, Lotte,” he cried. “I am healthy!”

She answered, “I know.”

That irritated him. How could she know anything about it!

“You? Oh how clever you are! So tell me then, what do you know?”

He heard, “Tonight –”

But nothing more.

Then he cried, “Tonight what? I ran away –yes! Away from you! I’m done with you!”

Slowly her answer came, hesitant, “No, we are not done. I knew you were healthy –already before that. –Oh, never mind!”

He pressed, “Go on, Lotte, say it!”

“No!” She came back. “No! –What does it matter to you? Forgive me –I learned it from you!”

He replied again, “Very well! But you must still tell me. Come over here Lotte; pick me up in your auto. We can drive across the river, over to the land.”

She sobbed, “I can’t. I –I’m sick. I don’t want you to come to me either –not today –not this week –wait, until I call.”

“Lotte,” he cried, “Lotte –”

But there was no answer.

The old servant brought tea and the morning paper, silent, emotionless and idiotic.

“Aren’t you going to ask where I was?” thought Frank Braun. “Or ask whether I’m going to sleep here now?” But the old servant didn’t ask. He went quietly across the wide room and picked up his dust cloth.

“Do that later at some other time,” Frank Braun told him and he left.

Pudding, tea and bread, the newspaper and his first cigarette. Then there came a knock. The servant announced the editor.

“Let him in,” he commanded. He was happy that someone had come. Now he could talk.

“Doctor,” said Tewes, “everything is now arranged. Here is the travel plan –we should travel in three days. We will begin up in New England –first in Boston. Then the Midwest, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago –twenty eight cities in all –it is enough for the first round trip. I’m traveling ahead, today yet. I believe that everything is well prepared –we had been afraid that you might have left us in the lurch.”

“Left you in the lurch?” he laughed. “Have I promised you something?”

The editor said, “Not you, Doctor!”

“Then who?” he asked.

It sounded very businesslike.

“Frau Van Ness.”

He burst out, “Frau Van Ness? –She assured you that I would travel? Presumably then she has also informed you that I have not been feeling very well and that I may leave you sitting?”

“Yes,” nodded Tewes. “We also heard that she is sick?”

“From whom, please?” he asked.

“From Frau Van Ness!” answered the journalist.

Frank Braun drummed on the table with his fingers. “Frau Van Ness!” he grumbled. “And the lady has presumably also told you that I am healthy again now?”

Tewes mimicked him. “Yes, the lady has told us that. The lady –Frau Van Ness –has just now called me –has told me that everything is in order, that you are able to travel.”

He stood, stepped right up close in front of the editor.

“Please!” he cried. “Whether I give speeches for you and your labor unions –whether I travel or not –tell me, what has that to do with Frau Van Ness? And furthermore, when I and the lady –yes, there is something crazy going on between her and your committee!”

The editor laughed. “Come on Doctor, you are not a little child! Since the outbreak of the war we have established thirty unions here –for all possible patriotic purposes –and if it lasts another year there will be three hundred. And the Allies –believe me –have ten times as many. Do you imagine that all these unions can operate for free? It requires capital –they call it backing over here. Money! Our backing, or –or a good three quarters of it –comes from Frau Van Ness. And when our interest in your speaking ability coincides with the interest that the lady personally takes in you –it is because she is the one that writes the checks. –Do you understand now?”

Understand? –Certainly –He understood the gentlemen of the committee very well. He knew what agitation and propaganda cost in this country and knew quite well that all the unions and committees always ran around with a ringing purse. Money –money! Many thousands must be thrown out, in order to take in the millions –the millions that the loyal gave for the homeland over there. But her? Why did she do it? What did she want? To give a little money for a cause, to write out checks –in God’s name yes! She was so very rich that she could give a thousand for every penny that he could. That was scarcely worth speaking about.

But this was something different. She had suggested him to the gentlemen, had sent him to the editor, and to the committee –but still more, she –had sent him back to Baltimore.

Had sent him –to try him out. Yes, that was it.

And –with her own money –now she was sending him on a speaking trip to the unions. Or else, she was sending him –through the committee. Not that they meant anything to her –oh no –but they created the

opportunity for him to speak and –pressured him to do it! But why? What was it to her –to Lotte Lewi?

He didn't comprehend. He smoothed his hair back, pulled his lips up into a smile.

"I will go –anyway!" he said.

Tewes whistled, "Anyway! –What is anyway? –Of course you will go!"

* *
*

He spoke in Boston; spoke in Buffalo, Rochester and Albany. He spoke in Columbus, in Milwaukee –every day he talked and often twice a day. He spoke in salons, in theaters, in fire halls –even twice from the pulpit. The public pushed forward, not because it had any idea of who he was –but because the editor had advertised it so well.

He shook many hands, and received reporters, new reporters every day. He always talked about the same things –to the reporters in the mornings, to enormous audiences in the evenings, and after that to individual people. He climbed onto the same train, climbed off, slept in identical hotel rooms everywhere. They always had the same bathtub, the same bible on every nightstand. Every morning they brought him a newspaper –his picture was always in it, always the same phrases were printed about him. Everything went like clockwork.

But then, one day, a wheel came loose. He scarcely felt it, but the editor, who never left his side, noticed it. He led him quickly away from the stage as soon as the applause had ended, didn't let him speak with other people. The editor received the newspaper people by himself, brought him champagne that evening before the entrance.

"What is it?" asked Frank Braun.

"You must know already," said Tewes. "You are tired again, are sick –I am answerable."

To whom?" he laughed. "To your committee? –Have they been asking about the cuckoo? If I have been a little tired?"

At that the journalist said, "Certainly not! But I have an extra job. $20 a day."

"An extra job?" he asked. "You? –From whom then –and what is it?"

“It is entirely in order,” said Tewes. “I am to look out for you –and Frau Van Ness pays it.”

Again! He wanted to take off, but the editor came up to him.

“Let it be!” he said calmly. “Someone is knocking –the doctor is here!”

He screamed, “Send him away! I will not see any doctor, do you understand!”

The other shrugged his shoulders, “Very well, I will send him away. I have done my duty.”

That evening he spoke very badly. He said exactly the same things as on all the other days, raised his voice, lowered it, made his pauses, exactly the same as always. But something was wrong, that something which captured the people. It seemed to him as if a wide wasteland lay between him and the people out there, as if the stage had become a strong concrete barrier that he had been able to cross before. He was not able to cross it that day. He stood there speaking, alone, indifferent –so tired.

“You don’t have any blood anymore!” said the editor.

That very night Tewes telegraphed and cancelled the last two or three remaining events.

“But tomorrow, tomorrow must still go on. Pull yourself together, Doctor.”

Tewes brought him to the train and prepared his bed.

“Sleep it out, all the way out!”

Frank Braun slept solidly enough and without moving during the entire storm that night. He woke up for the first time in the bright daylight right before Philadelphia. He was more tired than ever in spite of the sleep.

This time it was a debate, and in the enormous theater of the music academy. The house was filled to the last seat. The people were lined up all the way out into the street. Tewes led him up onto the stage and escorted him to his dressing room. He pressed a sheet of paper into his hands.

“Here, read this! That’s so you know what is happening today! –You seem to have forgotten everything!”

Frank Braun read. He knew exactly what was there, remembered very well that he had read the manuscript before, and the proof pages as well. His picture was there, and his name; there was the usual outcry over his alleged celebrity status. Then on the other side was the picture of a beautiful woman. It said Miss Maud Livingstone beneath it, and that she was the

most famous actress in the world, was an intimate friend and the best interpreter of George Bernard Shaw, that she –

Oh yes, he knew what was going to happen. She was going to speak for England, he for Germany. She would speak first –then he – and then she would speak once more. It was a tournament, a cock fight –

The journalist took the cork out of a champagne bottle and gave it to him, “Drink, drink! Overcome your apathy! Just for today.”

He drank the champagne down like water, but remained tired and cold, gazing completely indifferently at the fidgeting man that stood there in front of him. He heard every word that the journalist said, but it seemed as if he wasn’t speaking to him at all.

“There are five thousand out there! This is the best audience in the Quaker State! Three quarters of them are pro-English! –Drink! –And your opponent today is a woman –a lady –what do you think of that! This is not going to be like it was against Chesterton in Cleveland, or Hillis in Cincinnati! –A woman stands against you –in America! You can’t let me down today! –Everyone has advised me to take up this challenge for you –and I have done it –

–drink! Drink! I am relying on you completely. You must win today –Doctor –Do you hear! You must win over this woman! –Drink another glass. Nine chances out of ten are against you –it must go, damn it! Just one more time!”

Frank Braun nodded, slowly stood up and adjusted his tie.

Then he calmly said, “It might go –it might not! Most likely not!”

“If God is willing –,” began the editor.

But he interrupted him, “Leave it be! By now I know very well that something inside me speaks –it is not I! –And if it is not there –”

“What is not there?” cried the other. “What? –What speaks inside of you?”

He laughed, “What –? Yes, I don’t know that any more than you do, my dear Sir!”

He walked out behind the scenery. An elderly gentleman stood there with a lady in an evening dress. She was very tall, very strong with well developed hips and breasts.

“Is that Livingstone?” he asked.

The editor shook his head. “Her –no! –But that is Farstin! Don’t you know her?”

Oh yes, he knew her, Emaldine Farstin, the best singer in both worlds. He knew her from the Dresden Opera, from Berlin, from New York.

Tewes introduced him. The Diva shook hands.

“I have a concert here tomorrow,” she said. “But I came one day early, just to hear your debate. You have courage Doctor, –to speak against this lady in this country.”

She looked at him with large black eyes. “Why aren’t they burning with passion?” he thought.

“Break a leg and your neck!” The powerful woman wished him. “I’m giving you a thumbs down.”

–The Bell rang, shrill and penetrating.

“Come on,” urged the editor. “On the stage! Would you like to come with, gracious lady?”

She laughed, “There are no other seats –it is rarely this full when I sing! We are happy just to have a couple chairs here in the wings.”

The journalist led him onto the giant stage; the curtain had not yet been lifted. Behind them in a half circle were twelve rows of people, and in front, right on the edge of the stage stood three tables and three chairs.

“The gentlemen there is the umpire,” said Tewes. “The best card in the city! A Scotsman, a judge –cost us $100!”

He led him up. Then, from the other side, came the actress with her impresario –they greeted each other and shook hands.

The Scotsman took a slip of paper and read out loud, “Well then –will a victory of the Axis powers, or of the Allies –bring progress to the world –and more importantly, will it bring progress to America?”

The English lady laughed, “One thing is certain, nothing on earth can bring progress to this monkey land!”

Frank Braun looked up. She is smart, he thought. He looked at her, searching, testing, just like her critical gaze was measuring him.

She was very elegant in her lavender colored dress. Her gray eyes were sharp and clever. Her features were symmetrical and noble. She wore no jewelry and no wig. Her wavy blond hair was pulled back and held with a comb and there was a slight gray on her temples. She was no comedian –she was a great lady.

“She is shrewd!” whispered Tewes. “She understands her audience!”

There was a signal, and then the curtain rose.

The Scottish judge introduced them to the audience, and with a good humor. He knew nothing about either of them, only what he had just read on the paper –but the audience didn't know any more. He lied and chatted –and the people applauded and were entertained. He spoke of murderous Europe where people on both sides were killing each other, and of this majestic civilized land, where the fighters opposed each other with weapons of spirit instead. He told a long story about how famous both fighters were –and about their causes –then naturally closed with the "Star-Spangled Banner" and all the voices joined in.

Then he turned it over to the lady.

She spoke simply and cleverly. Right at the beginning she spoke a few full throated sentences about the wonderland of America, and then quickly showed her magnificent teeth in a smile, sounded out every word, spoke simply and convincingly.

Frank Braun felt how she knew the crowd, knew them, captured them and held them, solidly, so solidly –in her nervous little hand.

He would not hold the masses tonight –not him. He looked down, they were listening breathlessly, every eye was on her –every eye hung on this skillful woman. No one was looking over at him.

He stood up, very calmly and quietly. With two steps he was in the first wing backstage. He smiled –He was certain that hardly anyone had noticed.

But someone had –Tewes.

He came after him in a moment.

"What do you want back here?" he asked.

"Are you running away? Leaving? You want to run away. That is –"

Frank Braun said, –Cowardice – Yes. –as far as I'm concerned."

The other grabbed him by the jacket, spoke to him, begged –scolded –it fell like hail strikes. Coward –traitor –worse than desertion –he should be ashamed of himself! Pathetic escape –

He listened to it all patiently, and didn't answer. The editor got more and more upset, but finally left him alone when he saw that it was useless.

He said, "Then go if you will! –In the end it will be better for me!"

Frank Braun asked, "Why will it be better for you?"

Tewes pulled a telegram out of his pocket and gave it to him, "There, read that! –That is the answer to my report from this morning!"

–He read, "Cancel today as well! Bring him back immediately. Van Ness."

The journalist said, “I did not cancel –because I wanted to do this. That would have cost me my job –and I can really use the money. That’s why it will be better for me if you don’t speak!”

Frank Braun crumpled up the paper.

“She will not get her way!” he hissed. “I will speak!”

Then he said to Tewes, “Just go –I will come onto the stage at the right time.”

He turned his back to him and went with long steps around backstage, stepped into his dressing room, drank up the rest of the bottle of champagne and went back onto the stage again. He paced back and forth. He was tormented and agitated. He clenched his fingers and bit his tongue, rubbed both hands over his face.

“I must –I must –” he whispered.

But he could not force it. He remained empty, empty. It was like a wasteland –and there was not a blade of green grass anywhere. He became hot with fever, trembled, felt the tears in his eyes, felt like his knees were going to buckle –

He staggered, held on tight to the backstage for support. A noise made him start –inside they were applauding and cheering. Despairing, he stared out onto the stage –like someone –, that was about to be hanged.

Something pulled at him –made him stagger forward a step. He looked up –into the dark eyes of the Diva.

“What is wrong with you?” she asked.

He whined, “I don’t know.”

But then –suddenly, without introduction, “May I kiss you?”

He didn’t wait for her answer. He grabbed her, pulled her tight to him, wildly like an animal. He tore her arms down, pressed his breast against her mighty breasts, grabbed her head and kissed her.

He felt completely, how her lips opened. He closed his eyes and drank, drank this ravenous kiss –

There was a noise behind him and applause and cheers –

He tore himself loose, ran around the stage again, past the background. He heard the ring of the umpire, felt the sudden quiet of the people, and then heard the judge’s words as he turned it over to him. Then he was up front, stepping onto the stage, moving right up to his table.

But the people didn’t want him. A couple began clapping –and everyone joined in. They were applauding once more for the woman.

He stood there trembling, nervously smiling, and pushing his hair back, waiting –

Again the umpire stood up and asked them to be quiet. Again the crowd of people became quiet, but they hissed and cried out as soon as he opened his mouth. Once more they began clapping for the lady. He understood very well what was happening. They didn't want him to have a word, but he laughed.

Then the actress waved with her hand, and they became quiet. Then she asked –for him. It was not right –they should be fair –in this land of freedom and opportunity –and allow him to speak as well.

At that they clapped again.

How skilled she is, he thought, and how certain of her victory! Certain like the major on the "Ryndam"!

Now they were quiet. Now he could begin. He spoke easily, more easily than ever. He didn't make any funny jokes and didn't say any beautiful words about the majesty of America. He spoke cleverly and fluidly, fully conscious of every word and every meaning. He spoke just as well as the lady even –and more convincingly –

Then he felt that it was going to come. Perhaps now –or in the next sentence –or the next one. At some point it was going to come –

That, which she did not have; that, which he had lost today and now found again in the kiss of the tall woman; that, which could tame the many headed beast down there below and pacify it, like a little kitten that prettily eats out of the hand and licks the whip –that, which gave him the power, to hammer his thought into the animal's brain and his conviction into the animal's shaggy breast.

And then he seized a word, two or three –a sentence, skillful, polished and pointed –lashed out with it like a blow from a riding crop. Then once more and again –the iron door flew wide open from the staggering blows of his magical whip.

And then the animal of five thousand heads had only one enormous soul. And that soul was mighty and wide like a Cathedral –and he stepped into it through the opened iron door. It was aroused by the whistle of his riding crop –aroused by the burning torch that he held in his left hand, that he threw into the depths of the Cathedral where it flamed it up.

Then he saw nothing else. There was only the red that his eyes drank in.

Blood, he thought, blood! He stepped through the flaming ocean –screaming loudly. He laughed –like a prophet –

That is all that stayed with him, only that. He didn't hear his own words, or the storm of the crowd after he became quiet. He didn't hear the words of the judge, or even the fearful closing words of the English woman, or the praise and applause and screams at the end –that were only for him –him and his cause. He only saw the flames and all the blood –

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He stood backstage with the powerful Diva.

"Are you staying at the Ritz too?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Then eat with me tonight!" she continued. "And –"

He took her hand and kissed it.

"Yes," he said, "I will do that."

He held her gaze –now it burned warm and good, soft and inviting at the same time, like a fireplace. Right away he desired her, and he felt, that she wanted him –it spoke in his eyes. Her answer was, tonight.

She took his arm, squeezed it.

Then she laughed, "I drink a glass of Bordeaux before every performance. Others must have Chartreuse, others beer or something! But you –? I hope that you will always find such a good natured sheep as I am!"

The old gentleman laughed, and the editor and the others that were standing around.

Tewes joked, "He already drank champagne –an entire bottle full! It didn't work with him!"

He bowed, "Beautiful lady –is not your kiss that much better than champagne?"

She pulled her lips up into a smile. "That might be –but not for you!"

She pulled him back stage and said lightly, "Do you think I don't know what you wanted?

–There!" She held her handkerchief out to him –there were drops of red blood on it.

He stared at the cloth. That –that was what he had wanted?

She whispered, “You bit my lip! I’m going to get even with you – tonight!”

Chapter Four: Emeralds

"I looked on my left half as the lady me taught
And was war of a woman wortheli ye clothed,
Purfiled with pelure the finest upon erthe
Y-crowned with a corone the king hath none better.
Fetislick hir fyngres were fretted with gold wyre,
And there-on red rubyes as red as any glede,
And diamants of derrest pris, and double manere safferes,
Orientals and ewages enuenymes to destroy."
-Will. Langley (1377) "Vision of William
Concerning Piers the Plowman."

" –and the emerald protects the power of belief in battle against the enemy."
-Rabanus Mauras, Archbishop of Mainz (786-856 A.D.)

They had him completely and solidly in New York –he was right in the middle of the German work. In the mornings, quite early, his secretary brought the mail and read it to him out loud. He dictated letters and articles for newspapers and magazines. –Then there were visitors, one after the other, the entire day long; in the evenings were speeches –in the city and on the mainland whenever it was needed.

They sent everything to him that the others didn't want, everything that was picky and difficult. Also they sent everything that was a little dangerous, that in some way bordered against the raw edges of the law, one way or the other. Washington crawled in servile reverence for England. It was full of envious hatred against anything that appeared German, wove out of its absurd laws millions of paragraphs in an ever tightening net that was laid to snare anything, always prepared to snatch up a couple of Germans that dared to work for their country. When they caught someone –there was such an outcry, such jubilation in all the papers. Another German criminal, a betrayer, high treason, a bomb thrower and murderer! Really, the crimes were quite petty when they finally went before the jury. Some whimsical,

childish, long forgotten paragraph had been violated. But they always held the lawbreaker accountable, punished him severely and sent him into prison for long years.

Here was a place which he could fill out, that was certain. He had no occupation, was no merchant, no industrialist. He was unattached, free, and had no regard for this country. It was dangerous, certainly, but was it any less dangerous over there on the front? –And then, it was not especially that bad for him. He was not a German-American, like most of the others. He only needed to know one duty, only one loyalty, for Germany. He had good acquaintances, friends –also on the mainland; they would be glad to help, if it was needed.

"Nothing will happen to you!" laughed the tall Tewes. "Not to you! They will not let you fall!"

"I'm just like any of the others," replied Frank Braun. "Who would help me?"

The editor cried, "Who? –Young Hunston and Ralf Oakman and the Chutnams and Poates! All of them and the entire Newport set! And Marion de Fox and Marlborough and Susan Piermont! –All the people that know you personally, as well as those out of Paris and out of Yokohama and the others! Really, they scarcely know anything about you –only, that you are somebody, and that you are some kind of celebrity. But that is enough! –The entire pack would intervene in your case –You would scarcely receive two years where I would receive forty! And you would never serve those two years! –There would be an acquittal for you –that is certain!"

–It happened slowly, very gradually without him –or anyone else –really knowing when or how. But it was happening everywhere –and finally it happened to him. One day there were a few detectives lounging in front of his door through the days and through the nights. They were miserable lookouts for some private investigator company that was working for the English government, poor starving devils that were happy to have a job and earn a few dollars. He soon became acquainted with them, bought them cigars and invited them in for a whiskey, first one and then the others. Soon he had them right where he wanted them. They didn't follow him everywhere anymore and were very satisfied when he wrote out daily reports for them of where he was going and what he was doing. That way they were able to keep the travel money that the company so richly supplied them with, fares for trains, subways, buses, and many taxis –it was a

beautiful service. And their reports were always in the best order, everything was exact and correct. Just once in a while, when he had something to do that they didn't need to know about, there were things that didn't get put in the reports. But that was seldom enough. They were also able to write their own reports about his visitors, to experience firsthand just how harmless they all were. So those that watched became his friends and helpers, always prepared to do anything that he requested as if it was their duty to lay in front of his door like loyal hounds and warn him of any danger.

Inside it was always about passports, passports and again passports. The people had become clever and didn't send reserves by the thousands any more into the English and French prisoner of war camps. Now they only sent over individuals, most of them officers, people that would be very valuable because of their own skills and experiences. These were prepared with papers of all types that would protect them very well if they had a little luck. American papers were the cheapest and the worst at the same time. They could be easily bought anywhere in the city, both genuine and counterfeit, whatever you wanted. That was no problem. But no one took them gladly because it was too easy for the English to see through the swindle. And then, when they applied for passports with their own true papers to the Yankee authorities a great outcry was raised over such misapplication of the law, Germans going over as American citizens to fight for Germany! It was shown who had the power in the land and they chatted about the violation of sacred rights and punished any poor fellow that they grabbed much more severely than any murderer or thief.

But Russian papers –they were good. Anyone that knew just a few Slavic words could travel with a Russian passport, with a Serbian one or one from Montenegro –They had Swiss –Dutch –and Scandinavian passports as well as Spanish, Italian –and others by the dozen –such as the South American countries. When it was especially important, they sought out ones with the proper age, appearance and occupation. The applicants studied the people of their passport country, learned the national hymn and took little pre-examinations with them for their visit to the English ship's officer. Many were still caught –but hundreds made it across, like drops, one after the other.

They sent all the fanatics to him, the ones that wanted to incite strikes in the weapons factories, at the docks and shipyards where the death

bringing freight was being shipped across the ocean. –

They sent all the people to him that they didn't want anything to do with, the inventors, dreamers and people with fuzzy ideas or wild insane thoughts, crazy people with large hearts and little heads, and sometimes swindlers, betrayers and stool pigeons. They sent everything over to him. He was the irresponsible one.

An old man came, had discovered a powder that only burned when it was wet. He ran into the bathroom, filled up the bathtub and sprinkled his powder over it.

"Try to put that out!" he cried triumphantly. "Just try!"

But Frank Braun couldn't extinguish it. He saved what he could and let it burn including his bathrobe and towels.

"Telephone!" bleated the old man. "Call up the fire department! Ha! They won't be able to extinguish it either!"

Frank Braun was not very eager to call the fire department.

"Extinguish it yourself!" he said.

But that was just it; the inventor could not extinguish it either.

"Put that over London!" he cackled. "10,000 tons of my powder over the foggy mist of London –from out of zeppelins! I must be there!"

Frank Braun went to the telephone and called up his chemical fact finder. From him he learned that the powder had been known for a long time and that it was very easy to extinguish, only not with water, but with paraffin oil or kerosene.

"Too bad about my bathrobe," he said.

But the old men spit, "What do I care about your bathrobe? It's London that I want, London!"

They brought designs for submarines that would cross the Atlantic and back again in a week, strange, miraculous torpedoes with new magical powers. It was all dirt cheap, all out of love for the old Fatherland; they only needed a small advance of a couple million. There were machine guns that could mow down entire regiments, gigantic cannons that could reduce any fortress to rubble with the turn of a hand. There were mighty airplanes as well that –

But how will I get them across?" asked Frank Braun. Well now, that was the thing. He was an inventor and not a shipper. Where there was a

will, there was a way –that was certainly true! But he didn't know what it was –

One, with red hair and darting little eyes, brought a large gyroscope. It only required two or three immense primitive motors that could be built anywhere in some German factory. The man went on slowly, step a step, intelligently and thoughtfully. The highway, yes –back there behind the corner –wasn't it? –Only ten houses away –and the walls were trembling in here! That was it! His giant gyroscope created tremors that could throw down entire cities –create a majestic earthquake –when ever and where ever he wanted. Waves went out from each of his earth motors, harmless, seemingly harmless, as long as they remained alone. But wherever the waves met and crossed, there things had to break loose –there! On the paper he showed the lines, first one, then another and another, that would sink Paris into rubble.

The redhead was anxious and not very certain.

"Perhaps there is a mistake in it," he admitted. "But I've worked through it, again and again, for thirty nights. I cannot find any failure."

The man looked at him questioningly. "I don't know," answered Frank Braun.

The other took his papers, looked over the diagrams and through all the calculations. There were many pages of wild numbers. Shyly he raised his head.

"Doctor," he whispered, "do you believe in it?"

Frank Braun said, "Yes. I do! It is so great –and so beautiful –that's why I believe in it, with mistakes –or without –I believe it."

The redhead folded his diagrams together. "It is horrible, terrible. Perhaps I have miscalculated. –Then it won't work."

"Leave the papers here with me," said Frank Braun. "I will read through everything for errors."

But the other didn't want to. He offered him money –it was refused.

"No," he said, "it is not about money. I have enough –$12 a week. If my calculations are correct, the Fatherland shall have them –as they are, without money. But first –I want to work through them one more time –perhaps there is something wrong."

"If they are correct?" asked Frank Braun.

The other said, "Then I will bring them back here. Or –or –I –will hang myself."

Then he left. He never gave his name or any address. He never came again.

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And others came, the very wild ones. Those that saw red, that wanted to plunder Canada, with twelve sabers and six rifles. They wanted to lay bombs under buildings and bridges, fly over munitions factories with airplanes and throw grenades into the air. Many were noble people with warm blooded hearts, and were prepared to do everything and give the last drop of their blood for Germany's cause. And again there were the cowardly adventurers and agents, paid and not paid, and those stool pigeons thrown in, to tempt him, crude or refined –they could be either way.

One came, but didn't want to do anything other than talk. He was from Vienna, a poor devil that played the fiddle. He unfolded packets, one packet after another –clippings from newspapers, hundreds of them. They were all lies, infamous slander against Germany, Austria and Hungary, against Vienna and Berlin, and the two Kaisers.

"What should I do with them?" asked Frank Braun.

"Here –here," cried the musician. "Just listen to this –"

He read –

"I know all that," Frank Braun interrupted him. "I have to read twenty three papers every day! –Just tell me, what I can do for you?"

Then it came out. The Kaiser was so sick and so old. They had murdered his wife and his only son. And now the heir to the throne and –

He sat there all alone in his Castle, entirely alone, and cried. Cried –through all the weeks and the months. The Russians burned the villages in Buchenland and Galician and the Serbians pressed over the Sau, Drina and the Danube. Everywhere, everywhere, the double eagle was fleeing from superior forces. That's what it said in the papers.

Poor Kaiser Francis was so sick and so old. He sat all alone in his beautiful Braun castle, and cried. Cried –through all the weeks and the months. –

If only a person could send him something, something that would bring him joy! So the dear old gentleman could just laugh once again!

But he didn’t know what it could be? It had to be something very special –something that no other person would have?

No, Frank Brown didn’t know what it could be either.

But, if he could find something –could he get it sent over? Could he be certain that the English would not steal it?

A present for the Kaiser? Oh yes, that would be easy! He could promise that.

“I will find it!” said the musician. –Then he left.

Frank Braun saw him again, a week later, at the police station. They had arrested him for attempted theft. He was questioned as well, sharply enough –the musician had given out his name as a witness.

The police chief questioned him.

“Now what do you know about this? We have been keeping an eye on you for a long time now! You are right in the middle of all these German conspiracies! Now you are helping this lunatic here. You want to send an animal across the ocean!”

He laughed, a good Irish laugh.

“What kind of beast is it?” asked Frank Braun. He was happy that it was an Irishman, that couldn’t be so bad.

“A hippopotamus!” cried the police chief. “Naturally he only wants it for the leather –that would be very rare in the Fatherland! No one would believe that the damned Kaiser in Vienna is foolish enough to desire hippopotamus sausages!”

He shouted and laughed, and the musician cried and sobbed. It was not very easy to bring out the entire story.

It went like this:

The musician had gone to Central Park, to the zoo –early in the morning at dusk. He climbed over the iron gate into the hippopotamus cage. There were the father –mother –and child –only three or four months old. It looked so comical, so amusing that anyone had to laugh at it –that was just what he was looking for. That’s what he wanted to steal –the hippopotamus baby, that’s what he wanted to pack up and send alive to the Kaiser. That would have made the dear old Kaiser laugh!

But the hippopotamus’s from Central Park in New York had very thick skins and no feelings at all for the golden heart of Vienna. Oh no, they were not sentimental at all, good natured perhaps –but when someone wanted to steal their little prince, it made them angry. They grunted, roared and

opened their mouths so wide that the poor artistic calf snatcher became fearful and afraid. So much so that he cried out –thank God! Then the zoo keeper came and freed him –otherwise he would now –be squashed, bitten and trampled by the two behemoths –for his Kaiser. –So they brought him to the police station.

The police chief believed nothing of the story. But he allowed them to call a couple of doctors, who declared the musician mentally disturbed. He also was willing to let the musician go on "Promise of further good behavior" if he would take the musician with him.

He was an Irishman and loved the Germans, admired them. He said, "There is only one thing they don't understand –absolutely not at all –and they could really learn from us! –They are the greatest failures as conspirators that there ever was! –They only made nonsense, only God damned nonsense."

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He never met Farstin again. He called her up but she was not at home, so he gave the maid his name and phone number. He waited, but the Diva never called back. He only saw her at the Opera, on the stage. He sent flowers to her dressing room, large orchids, and his card with a few words written on it. The usher came back grinning.

"Her answer?" asked Braun.

The fellow said, "She seemed of the opinion, that one was not needed –and she threw your flowers into the corner."

Moody, he thought, stage fright. But it bothered him. –What was up? Had he offended her? –And if so, how? He never found out.

–But one day Lotte came. She didn't even take off her coat, just grabbed his hand and immediately took him with in her car. She laid her hand on his lips when he tried to speak –fine white doe skin that smelled of Jicky perfume.

"Don't ask again!" she said. "I have thought it out, I want you –like I wanted you before –even now."

He replied? "Even now? What does that mean? –Are you jealous, Lotte?" Has someone told you –about the Diva?"

Oh no, she knew nothing about that. But now he had to give a report, remember everything very accurately. She listened quietly, breathing lightly.

"How did you leave her?" she asked. She looked at him, sharply, waiting, like a clever doctor. "Did you kiss her –goodbye?"

He laughed, "I ran away, Lotte! I woke up –as she was sleeping –then I ran away. Just like I did with you Lotte!"

"Did you see her again?" she asked.

He shook his head, said that he had called her up, sent her flowers. –" It was certain that she had wanted me that night –But now it appears that she wants nothing more to do with me."

Frau Van Ness let her head sink back into the upholstery. She sighed, a little mockingly and yet compassionately.

She said, "I can well imagine that!"

He didn't understand.

"What?" he asked.

She looked straight at him, warmly and with great love. She pulled off her glove and pushed her little hand into his hands.

She spoke, "You don't need another woman. No one, do you hear? I will stay with you –in spite of everything!"

He grabbed her hand tightly. He didn't understand her, wanted to laugh but found that he couldn't.

What is it?" he cried.

She asked, "You don't know?"

He became angry, "I know nothing at all, absolutely nothing! If you would be good enough to finally explain to me –"

Her fingertips pulsed, he felt very clearly how her blood beat, so soft and warm against his skin, in waves, quick little waves.

"You don't know?" she repeated. "Good –good!" And suddenly, "Have you been tired yet –these last few days?"

Her pulse held him fast –streamed through him with soft waves of pleasure. She noticed it as well and pressed his hand harder.

"Tired?" he answered, "Oh no –not now, when your hot blood is beating against my skin." –He whispered, "as if it wants inside."

She insisted, "But otherwise –have you been tired otherwise? Speak, my friend."

He closed his eyes, there was only feeling, just feeling. He murmured, –“Otherwise? Oh yes –several times –now and then.”

Lotte Lewi said, “I will heal you, do you know that? Today! And –and always! –I am your wine –drink!”

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She lay on her pillows in a deep red kimono. His was violet and he sat cross legged in front of her smoking his little Japanese pipe, by the dozens. One pull, just one –then a clear tone as he tapped it onto the bronze edge of his ashtray. And again –click! –And again.

All of her jewelry lay in front of her –so much jewelry, rings and necklaces, brooches, bracelets and earrings. There were diadems as well, hair clips and hat pins, golden boxes with enamel clasps, loose jewels, pearls and gems. She played with them.

“Come, my friend,” she said, “I want to make you pretty. You are speaking tomorrow at the Cort-Theater. This will bring you luck, give me your hand.”

She searched around in her rings and took one from India that carried a large aquamarine, but she hesitated as she put it out.

“This one?” she said doubtfully. “No, not this one. It’s bright green –but it doesn’t sting, like your eyes do. It has a yellow shine in it, instead of a blue one.” –She took out another ring, from which a beryl glowed. “Take this one. It is just as good a stone as any of the others.”

“No,” he said. “That is topaz, I am a November child.”

She laughed, “You are wrong! –This stone follows the zodiac and the third week of your month is ruled under the protection of the topaz. You, born in the first week, follow the scorpion. –You sting.”

She stiffened suddenly, almost became serious as she pushed the ring on his finger. “It always happens,” she whispered, “and yet –it is curious.”

“What happens?” he asked.

She leaned back, “Oh nothing, nothing! Your sign stings –like you.”

He looked at her in astonishment, “I sting?”

She stroked his finger. “Yes, yes you do! You must do it, because it is in the stars.”

She searched in her jewelry box and selected a little stone, on which a scorpion had been engraved.

“Put this in your pocket. Don’t lose it. It will make you strong.”

She held the stone out to him, there was a small “J” under the sign.

“What does it mean?” he asked.

“Joseph,” she said. “That is you.”

His eyes questioned and she answered. “Yes, Joseph, the strongest of the twelve brothers, the one that helped his folk –in a strange land. Here –in America –you –the German folk. Take it!”

He laughed at that, “Joseph –me? Do I need your charms that much?”

But she didn’t laugh along. She stared straight out in front of her for a long time, silently. Then she slowly said, “Again it fits. It always fits, everything that happens with you.”

She lifted the jewel up to her lips and kissed it. “When I had it cut I was not thinking about you in the slightest. The stone is named Shoham, from the tribe of Joseph –and it is a beryl. But that is the November stone, the stone of the scorpion –so I gave it your zodiac sign as well as that of Joseph.”

She handed the stone out to him and he took it.

“Guard it well,” she continued, “guard it well! –I had it cut –it and the other eleven –in Venice after you ran away from me for the third time.

He attempted to joke.

Was I very kosher? –Did I leave you my jacket?”

She stared straight at him, “Not your jacket –but you forgot your belt. –Would you like to see it? –And kosher? Oh I suspect you were kosher, –even in your wildest sins!”

She reached around in the gold and the jewels –took out all of the emeralds, radiant emeralds on hoops and rings. Then she continued. “Kosher –that is, unconscious! You are unconscious.”

“I am very conscious,” he said.

She shook her head, “No. You don’t know what you do. Your nerves do –and your brain does nothing about it. You flee away from yourself before your brain scarcely realizes what is happening. That is what –keeps you so young.”

She laughed brightly and it rang like the sound of acacia blossoms. “You are no begetter, no impregnator. Not you! You are the Earth, are the female and mother’s womb. You receive everything, everything fertilizes

you, alive and forcefully, with your will and against it. You are like the Earth.”

He spoke, “The Earth is an old whore.”

She nodded, “Oh yes, –like you. –And yet she is kosher at the dawn of each new day. –Like you!”

“Then you are the sun,” he said, and it rang passionately and ridiculous at the same time.

“Radiant,” he said, “warm, fertile!”

She held the emerald in both hands, moving it up-and-down.

The Sun,” she began. “The Sun? –No. –The moon perhaps. It creates the ebb and flow. It drives the Earth’s blood, and that is just what you need, you child of earth.”

She held the green stone out to him, “There, look, how it flashes! I bought it in Columbia, from Mohammed Bachir, the one you told me about. Mr. Sidney Van Ness, my husband, paid for it. For that I slept with him that night.”

She watched out of half opened eyes; saw the light twitch of his nostril.

“Does that hurt you?” And she pressed, “Yes? –Yes? Does it hurt? I sold myself to him –time and again and again –often enough! Oh, he was a good person –believed in kissing his spouse and never suspected that a prostitute lay in his arms. But you should know that –you! I was your lover –your woman –since the beginning of time. And I slept with him –That makes me a whore –rich and great –and yet a whore –over and over again –for jewels and gold! You made me that way –you –! Did you want it –? Oh no! You didn’t want that –but you let it happen. It tormented you completely, hurt you, left bloody stripes –and yet, yet –it charmed you –tickled you –like the lash of a whip from a woman’s hands. Isn’t that so? Perhaps you even once made a poem about it –perhaps only a joke –or some paradoxical thought –that was enough for you, that alone. And that’s why you went –and scarcely noticed –through all the torment, walked away with light feet as I was miserably dying. Oh you were –very kosher!”

She threw the stone back, tore her kimono off with both hands. She sat there on the pillows, sitting up straight in a thin, lace covered gown.

“Make me pretty,” she laughed. “Take the emeralds, only the emeralds and nothing else. It is my stone. Make me pretty.”

He put rings on her fingers, pulled green ribbons over her naked arms, put large dangling earrings in her earlobes. He placed a small necklace

tightly around her throat and two larger ones as well that fell down over the back of her neck and her breasts. Then he pushed a radiant emerald crown into her red hair.

"Now the toe rings," she commanded, "and the ankle hoops."

He took her shoes off and her stockings. Then he pushed the green hoops over her feet and placed the rings, one on every toe.

"Bring the carafe," she said. "The large, polished one –with Crême de Menthe."

He got it and filled the glasses. "Drink up!" she laughed. "It is green – green like wet meadows on a June morning. My moon –when the Crab rules the zodiac. Green –fill it again and drink! –Green like my month stone, the emerald. It is Baraketh, the first stone in the second row of my plate and is also at the same time the stone of my old tribe, the stone of the priests, the stone of Levi."

She sat her glass down and took up a large box of gold, set with sapphire stars. She opened it and took out a strange plate. It was four-cornered, a span high and one wide. The plate was made of ancient gold, strongly inlaid with silver and even more with copper. There was a golden ring at each corner of the shield and little gold chains fell out of the upper rings. It appeared old, but the chains had apparently been made just a few years ago. The blue green silk bands were new as well. Two hung from the gold chains at the top and the other two ran through the bottom rings of the plate itself, which was set with twelve colored stones.

There were four rows and three stones in each row. Each stone bore in Hebrew letters the name of one of the children of Jacob.

"The onyx is Yahalom," she explained. "It is the July stone of the Lion. Zebulon carried it. Reuben had Odem, which we call carnelian and the Virgin protects it. Benjamin received Yaschpheh, Jasper and the Ram; Gad received the Twins and Shebo, the agate. Simeon holds the scales and is decorated with a chrysolite. It is named Pitdah. –Oh yes, my father showed these to me often enough –on many of the festival days. It was his way of celebrating."

He looked up, "Your father? I didn't know that he ever troubled himself over anything that was Jewish?"

She laughed, "That he did not –most certainly not. I was the first to do that –because you taught me – and because the Crab is my zodiac animal and runs in my family back to all antiquity. My father –this plate here was

the only thing that interested him about Judaism –and then it was only about the stones –not about Jerusalem's will. –This plate, you see –is a sacred relic."

She raised the plate up, laid it in the middle of her breasts under the emerald necklace and asked him to tighten the ribbons over her shoulders and back. She pulled her gown down and her breasts peeped over the colored stones like two curious white kittens.

"A sacred relic," she laughed loudly. "Yes –if it is genuine! And perhaps it is genuine, who really knows? It has been in Papa's family for four hundred years, wandered with them through entire Europe. –What would the east side say if they knew that it was now on the Hudson? Choschen Hammischpath! Just think, two million Jews live here and not one of them knows anything about it!"

"What is it then?" asked Frank Braun.

She drummed with her rosy red nails on the plate.

"A sacred relic," she repeated, "a great sacred relic! It is the breastplate of the High Priest! –How does it look on me?"

He opined, "Your great sacred relic –doesn't look that sacred on you."

"No," she laughed. "It doesn't. You know that I come from a long line of priests, one after another! But perhaps, " –she suddenly became serious and the bright ring of her voice became deeper –"Perhaps, you know, perhaps it is much more than that! –I have researched what I could find about the breast plate of the High Priest –and no description fits exactly with mine here. The Midrasch Bensidbar Rabba tells of it and so does Flavius Josephus. My plate is different." –She took his hand, pulled it up to her and her voice sank to a light whisper. "Look, look –it is smaller, much plainer. Not so costly, oh, not by far! My stone, Beraketh, is only a poor field stone, like those the Egyptians know as Uat –but it is green, like an emerald. And Judah's stone, Nophek, is no ruby, look, it's just a common garnet! That is a brown agate instead of Issachar's sapphire, and here is a malachite instead of a beryl. And that, my friend, means that my plate is not the one of the second Temple, not the one of the High Priest. It is the old one, the ancient original one that the Bible tells of, the one of my ancestor, Aaron!"

A force lay in her whispered words, a strange force that pressed against him. He had a feeling as if he needed to get away.

“And then,” he asked quickly, “what then? –To that one or the other one –what happened to it?”

She took his head in both hands, pulled him tightly against herself, so that her emerald eyes glowed into his.

“What happened to it? Oh, much, very much! Then, you know, my plate was hidden –it alone –”The Power and the Glory”!”

He laughed at that, “ –So that’s what it is! And you, you know that is what it is? Thousands of doctors since St. Augustine have broken their heads over it –but no one has ever found it!”

“Be quiet!” she cried. “Be quiet! I don’t know if it is –not any more than anyone else. But does that mean it’s not? Who can solve the revelations of St. John? And yet they exist in a thousand languages! Whether I know, whether I don’t know –is the same. The magick rests here on my breast –here, right here –in Aaron’s plate!”

He shrugged his shoulders and joked,” If –it is genuine!”

She laughed with him, threw herself back onto the colored pillows, raised her left knee and crossed her right leg over it. Then she whipped her little foot up and down so the hoops on her ankles jingled lightly and the emerald rings on her toes sparkled.

“If it is genuine –Oh yes! But that is something I don’t know, and no one can know –That is what makes it so dear to me. So I believe –every now and then, when I’m in the right mood! –That it is Aaron’s miraculous breastplate –and then –then it is genuine to me! Would you like to hear its story? It is written down in my head and nowhere else. It lay in the first temple since Aaron’s death, performed miracles and gave oracles, up until the time that Baal became stronger than Jehovah. After Babylon led the children of Israel away as captive slaves and took all the treasure from the destroyed Temple with them –only this one little piece remained behind, hidden away from the enemy and buried under the ruins of the Temple by the pious hand of one of my ancestors. Israel came back, built the second Temple and created a new breastplate, one larger, more beautiful and more expensive than this one here.

But later they found the old one under the rubble, gave a great celebration, and protected it very well through many centuries in a sacred shrine with other sacred relics. That is until Titus tore Jerusalem into ruins, until he towed the treasure of the Temple back to Rome. There it lay –as told by Josephus –in the Concordia of the Temple where a space had been

built for it. Gaiseric, the vandal king, took Rome and towed all the treasure back to Africa. As the robber empire of that red haired hero collapsed, Belisar took the great booty back to Byzantine and Emperor Justinian placed the Jewish treasure in the sanctuary of Hagia Sophia. But then he sent it back to Jerusalem, and they protected it in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. –I read all that in Procopius, who wrote about the vandal wars."

"It is still a long way from there to Manhattan," he said.

She nodded, "Far enough, there and back, –like that of the Jews! Khusru II, the Persian king, took Jerusalem. He towed everything that the Temple held back to Ctesiphon, the richest city that the world ever saw. But my plate didn't remain there long. Omar, the Arab, beat the Sassanian Empire into pieces, took the capital city and the enormous treasure. Did you know that in one day he carried off over one thousand million in treasure? But my poor old stones did not carry much value with them. –That is the last that I could find in the history books.

Yet it is curious enough, I think. Devotees of the great Baal took the plate of Aaron, then Romans, children of Odin, Aryans and again Persians. Fire devotees of Zarathustra stole it and finally Mohamed's savage folk of the desert and it has always returned back to the Jewish folk. Now listen to this –Omar's sons divided the empire and the treasure. This little plate was holy to the Moslems, like it was to the Jews –so it is likely that some prince or officer took it along back into Egypt where it came from.

Then it left again on another trip through Africa. It came back to Spain with Tariq ibn Ziyad and lay hidden in Córdoba or Granada and the treasure chambers of the Umayyad and the Nasseriden dynasties. But the Catholic Majesty's, Isabella and Ferdinand, took it when the Alhambra fell –they most certainly placed no worth on the poor stones, even if they themselves knew what it was. So the plate probably went to some Spanish noble and he or one of his children traded it to a Jewish healer, a Sephardi Jew from the Iberian peninsula, one with great skill that saved many Christian lives. As thanks for that he did not need to participate in an auto da fé, a ritual of public penance, during the inquisition and was instead graciously robbed beggar poor and chased out of the land. He took Aaron's plate back with him to Amsterdam or perhaps Hamburg! –And somehow it later came to one of my ancestors, a German Jew, my father's people were called –Ashkenazi Jews. And so it finally came, for the first time into Yankee land with a half German. Here it would like to help, if it can –both you and me –

everything that is Jewish, and everything that is German, both! And it will do it –if you let it!”

Her voice rose, rang certain, bright and clear. She stood up straight, raised the plate with both hands, lifted it to her lips and kissed it –almost passionately.

He joked, “Just like a prophet! But don’t forget, they were men and you –!

She cried out at that, “And Deborah? What about Deborah? –She was a woman, a female, just like me! Her hands dripped with blood and her heart was full of hate against the enemies of her folk. Just like mine!”

A little twitch pulled at his lips, “You!” He said, “You? A mixed blood –Lotte Lewi!”

“That is exactly why!” She retorted, “So I can feel doubly –with my father’s people that are being miserably martyred to death in Poland and in Russia –and with those of my mother –that are now fighting for their lives against the entire world.”

He could sense very well how serious it was to her –That’s why it was so charming to him and his voice rang contemptibly enough as he said, “Pure sentimentality –engendered and inherited!”

“No,” she cried, “no! There was nothing Jewish about my father, who was baptized for a long time before I came into this world, or is nothing except my name and nose. There was no love –rather a hatred for everything that was Jewish –that is what I inherited from him. And engendered? At the zoo in Berlin? You know it the best. It was you, you alone who told me that I was Jewish! It was you, who woke up everything inside of me that was Jewish –and made me a Jew for the first time!”

He said scornfully, “Have I perhaps also made you into a German?”

But she remained quiet and confident, “No, the war did that! I am what I am, a half blood. But I have my Fatherland, have my folk –two folk, if you will!”

He poured the glasses full, “Drink, Lotte, drink! To your Fatherland!”

She did the same to him, “And to yours!”

“I don’t believe I have one,” he said, shrugging his shoulders. “Those things that I speak and do are only a game, Lotte. Work –travel –lust for adventure! But do I believe –and have love for my country? No –no!”

“You have lost it,” she said, “perhaps never had it. I will lead you to it.”

He laughed out loud, “The way is wide, Lotte, like that of your stones.”

But she insisted, “And you should go on it, with me!”

And again this compelling force rang out of her voice.

He filled his little pipe and lit it, took a quick pull and knocked it out on the bronze ashtray. Then he began, “I will not go on it, never. You are right, I have never known that, which they call love for the Fatherland. But I have searched for it, very passionately searched for it this past year. I’ve searched with my brain and with my heart, just like everyone that is German, everywhere in the world. And I now know that I will never find it, can never find something that is not there. Many have searched for it, through all times, smart people –and no one has found it. Only fools still dream of such a nebulous land.”

“Who has searched for it, who?” she asked. “Who searched passionately for it and never found it?”

He answered, “I will tell you as many names as you want. Each one has a good ring! What was the Fatherland to Frederick the great? A ridiculous joke! He, who could scarcely speak German, spoke and wrote in French and did not choose Gotthold Lessing as advisor and head librarian but an uneducated Franciscan monk instead! It was this clever Hohenzollern, who made bloody jokes, that ‘created the nation of Prussia!’

And Lessing said, our German Lessing, “I have no comprehension of love for the fatherland. At most it appears to me as a heroic weakness.” –That goes along well with what his friend, Friedrich Nicolai, wrote, “German national spirit is political nonsense.” He certainly had no talent as a writer, but did have a sharp understanding. –Do you want more prestigious names? Goethe? He, whom Napoleon admired, wrote in his ‘Xenia’, ‘If your hope is to build a German nation, then it is in vain!’ –And Schiller wrote even more sharply and strongly about Jacobi, ‘It is the obligation and duty of philosophers and poets to belong to no folk!’ –That, that, Lotte, is what the most German of our German poet’s said –oh, and you don’t believe how very German that is!”

She moved her head lightly back and forth, “It is genuinely German! Just like it is genuinely Jewish –as it was with my father –to be baptized!”

She sounded deliberate, almost challenging. He hesitated, didn’t comprehend at that moment where she wanted to go with it –that took his certainty away.

“What do you mean?” he asked uncertainly.

“Oh nothing!” she laughed. “But tell me –since when do you believe in authority? You –Frank Braun?”

He became quiet at that and she continued, “Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, Frederick the great! –Tell me now, don’t you talk about these people in your speeches to the folk? Am I wrong, my friend –I mean, don’t you talk of them as people that belonged to something? And that says something entirely different, isn’t that true? – Answer me!”

He bit his lips and searched for an answer, “It’s for the masses,” he stuttered, “for the plebeian’s –”

“Oh yes, yes, my Lord and Master! Oh yes! –And you think that I belong so very much to the masses that you want to dish out your wisdom to me as well? Me –who have been your little student –learn how to think and feel –only through you? Me?”

Her eyes stood wide open –they glowed green and challenging, like her stone.

“Wake up, Master,” she cried. “Wake-up!”

He put his hands on his forehead and rubbed hard, as if he wanted to wipe away a swindle.

“You are right,” he spoke. “I have thrown myself away, made an idiot of myself and everything else. It is childish and must come to an end.”

“What must come to an end?” she asked.

He said, “My work, my so-called German work.”

She took his hand and all of the triumph faded out of her voice. Still she spoke quietly and seriously.

“No, no, my friend, you will continue doing it –and even more than before. You serve a thought and belief –you are needed. You are a tool. You must work.”

He sighed lightly, “It will put me right into the ground.”

But she said, “You –never! Me –perhaps!” She didn’t wait for his question. “Oh, you will understand it later sometime. Not my money –Oh no! I give more, and it is much more valuable –in order to make you strong for your –work”

Again she cut his question off, “I will not tell you, no! –But I will tell you, why I will do it.”

She stroked through his blonde hair with her hand, lightly stroked his moist forehead.

“Listen, my dear boy, listen to me. I am your bride and your mother, your lover and your sister in this time and I am your prophetess too. I want to make you great and strong –and I can do it, when I make you German. Then I know very well that it will raise you –far, far out of yourself.”

He said defiantly, “Try it then, if you want to and think you can.”

But her confidence remained, “I can do it, and I’m the only one that can do it. I can make you German.”

Her hand trembled, she let go of his hand and grabbed onto the stones of her plate. Her voice rang strangely, almost visionary, as she spoke.

“I have been given a sign.”

His eyes asked, “You?”

She nodded, “Yes –me! Oh, it is no secret, no mystery! What I know has been known by many, perhaps millions, over the past three thousand years and more! But it has not occurred to anyone else, and no one understands the sense of it –No Jew and no German. I discovered it. Me alone!”

Again she lifted her breastplate and stroked it with caressing fingers. “The twelve tribes wandered in the wilderness, each for themselves, and yet all for one in battle against the superior enemies around them. It is like the Germans today –the Bavarians, the Saxons, the Prussians and the Austrians. And just like your tribes rally around their own flags, the black and white, green and white, black and yellow or blue and white –each tribe of the children of Israel had its own flag. Red waved over the camps of Reuben’s children, sky-blue over those of Judah. White was Zebulun’s color, Issachar’s was black. The color of each tribe was only one color. –only one tribe, just one, had a multicolored flag.”

“Which one?” he asked.

“Wait,” she said, “wait! As the Promised Land was conquered, they divided it out among the tribes into twelve equal parts. But the tribe of Joseph, the greatest of the brothers, received two parts, one for each of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasse. So one of the other tribes had to go away empty, that was my tribe, Levi. It was the tribe of the priests and set above all the others. It was the binding cement that held Israel together. And this tribe, the tribe of Levi, had already flown a three colored flag in the wilderness. Do you know the colors? Black –White –Red!”

“That is not true!” he cried.

“It is true,” she answered. “I will show it to you in the Sepher Midrash Rabba, and in dozens of other ancient texts! Black, white and red are the proud colors of Levi’s flag –three times mine –and yours as well! Many have known it, read about it down through the centuries. But no one, no one has seen the meaning. I found it for the first time all by myself –because my heart beat against Aaron’s plate, which contains “The Power and the Glory!”

She held her glass out to him and he filled it with emerald fluid. She sprang up, and stretched her naked arms out wide.

“The Black, White and Red waved high in the wilderness over all the other flags of Israel! What would Bismarck have said, if he had known that when he chose those colors at the founding of the new empire instead of black, red and gold?

And what about Lord Beaconsfield, his great contemporary, the Jew Disraeli! He was the first of all people to speak out, that the world belonged to only two folk, both together, tightly united, the German and the Jewish. –Oh, through my veins flows, very well mixed, both bloods. I am a German and Jew at the same time. And I, I have found the message of my tribe for this time –long live my German –long live my Jewish folk! Levi’s proud flag leads them –both united –through the wilderness –to the promised land –that is –Mastery of the world! For that –for that –I give it –and you my life!”

She emptied her glass in one swallow –threw it far out across the room. Then she stood, high, with outstretched arms –wild, half naked, ecstatic, and unmoving.

“Deborah,” he whispered, “Deborah!”

Then she trembled, her knees buckled. She let her arms fall and sank back down into the pillows. She closed her eyes and lay there, breathing heavily. Strong tremors shook her body and her sweet breasts sobbed over Aaron’s ancient stones.

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He went across Madison Square in the dusk –there, a couple blocks away, where Broadway and Fifth Avenue, became one. Behind him both giant streets were separated by the knife edge of the mighty flatiron

building, the only building in the entire city that carried a strongly unique thought. He crept along the walls of the buildings through the icy snowstorm, working his way further step by step and floundering deeply in the white snow.

Across, on the north side surrounded by pillars, he saw the strong brick building of Madison Square Garden, copied from the Alcazar of Seville, complete with the Giralda bell tower.

It occurred to him that a year ago he had been eating and drinking up there on the roof garden one wild night with Stanford White, the architect, and slender Evelyn Nesbitt Thaw, the performer. White, the renowned architect, was the pride of New York. Then on the very next day –and in the same chair –he encountered the death bringing bullet of Harry Thaw, her husband. –Who even thought of his name today –who spoke of him? It was scarce, but every once in a while someone from some other state spoke about his millionaire murderer, who had played insanity and been set free by some court. Or when Evelyn Nesbit croaked out one of her husky songs in vaudeville. –

And not far from the Alcazar building was the Greek temple of the Supreme Court, and on the other side, the Presbyterian Church with four enormously tall marble pillars. But both buildings were overwhelmed, crushed to death, by the sky high mass of the Metropolitan building, tasteless, cheap, and without feeling, just high, large and gigantic, towering like a four cornered tower of Babel from whose top a red flaming torch shone. This crude tower, with its showy, illuminated, giant clock contrasted with everything in the area that had any style, form or color.

There on the corner of Twenty Third Street, tucked into a doorway was a Jewish newspaper boy shouting out into the snow storm. His Jewish papers, **Truth**, **Future**, and **Forward** were huge newspapers from the east side in the Jewish language and Hebrew alphabet that were sold by the hundreds of thousands. He bought a couple of the papers and read the jubilant headlines, “Hindenburg gives Moscow her daily portion!” – “Germany gains reinforcements!” That would make millions in the New York ghettoes rejoice!

He knew very well that it was only their hate, their raging hate against murderous Russia who was slaughtering their brothers and fathers, mothers and sisters like sheep in a slaughterhouse, no, clubbing them to death out in the open like mangy dogs. And yet they stood side by side with his folk –

there was not one of these papers that did not openly fight for Germany's cause –oh, even more decisively, wildly and recklessly than the German newspapers themselves in this country.

He battled tiredly through the storm, diagonally across the place. A melody hummed in his head, some old street song that kept going through his head. He searched for the words. –It must have something to do with what he had just been thinking about –with the Jews and with the Germans. Then it occurred to him, slowly, line by line –first the rhythm and then the words that fell very heavy on his tongue.

"Ti kolinší židí
Křestány vrazdejí!
Holku podřezali
Krv jé vycedili
Do vody hodili!"

That –yes that –that was what he had heard over and over again in Bohemia. Just like this year on all the streets, in all the locales, from the hurdy-gurdy players and the gramophones, from pianos and violins, from music bands and from the throats of the people everywhere, singing, whistling and playing. Everywhere, through nights and days, the battle song of the allies filled the city "Tipperary" and again, "Tipperary"!

Tipperary –the battle song of the allies, and –naturally! –That of all the Yankees that were against Germany. They sang it, because it was fashionable –but also to show their love for England, Russia and France, and to express their hatred against the Germans. Just exactly like the Bohemian folk expressed their hatred against the Jews in this hot little song:

"The Jews came from Kolin

They slaughtered the Christians
Cut the throats of the little girls,
Poured their blood into a bucket
Threw it deep down into the well."

That is how the folk felt, felt like that and no other way! And they were rock solid in their belief of ritual murder –kill him dead, the Jew!

What –what did Lotte Lewi want to do with that –with her great union, her proud dream of love and brotherhood? It was foolishness, a childish dream.

–But no, no! It was not the Christians –it was the Germans alone that she wanted to unite with Israel. These, these lines from this little song were not from Germans, they were from Czechs and Slavs, like the pogrom bands of the Czar. Hadn't a Czech regiment mutinied immediately at the beginning of the war –and ran over to the enemy with flying colors? They hated the Germans no less than the Jews.

He considered, and thought back on his time at Prague. There had been carousing day after day, brawling colorful capped German students, whose unconcerned strolling over graves had incited the mobs. There had been sticks and stones –many times even knives and bullets. And it was always a German student against a dozen Czechs. Who were these German lads that had no fear, that laughed so brightly, and placed their blood – and perhaps their lives –in play for the German cause at the oldest German university? These high grown fellow countrymen and fraternity students, turning, drilling and doing exercises in uniforms and caps as their rapiers rattled loudly over the pavement? Who were these Germans in Prague that battled for their language and customs year in and year out in the middle of a Slavic country? They were nine tenths pure Jews by race. The Czechs gave them the sweet name of lousy, mangy, dirty, wallowing**,** German dogs. They thought of them as German –Oh yes, all this Slavish hatred of Germans was nothing more than anti-Semitism in the final analysis!

And those Jews that felt themselves to be Germans, that fought in the hottest places most passionately for Germany's cause were Levi's children fighting for the black, white and red! Jews and Germans against the Slavs –wasn't that the daily cry of the Jewish newspapers –the passionate desire of the millions in the New York ghettos? Jews as Germans –as an equal tribe of the German nation, like the Swabian, the Franks, the Styrian,

Pomeranians and Tiroleans –wasn't that Lotte Lewi's prophetic dream? Fulfilled there in the oldest city of German science –years before the war! Unobserved –and scarcely noticed by anyone here or there, but still clear and open, graspable with both hands.

And again, wasn't it as if an ancient word was becoming true for the second time –larger, stronger than the first time? That time, in little Palestine, the tribe of Levi received no portion of land, but merged into all of the tribes, cementing them tightly together, the tribe of Louis whose flag flew the German colors. Couldn't it happen again in the near future? Israel as a German tribe mixed through them all and cementing them more completely and tightly together!

A foreign element? A piece of Asiatic race? Oh, he was not afraid of that! These racial questions were children's eggs that they had been walking on with the soles of their feet for thirty years already. It had happened more than once in the last century –and what had happened once could happen again. In the 19th century in the Crimean the Hungarian folk of the Chasaren had converted to Judaism. Today there were no better Jews than these blonde, blue eyed Karaim out of south Russia. Oh, it was possible, most certainly possible.

And then? –Then? Germany would be Israel's Zion –and the Promised Land –would be the entire world!

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He turned around the corner toward Gramercy Park. Someone was coming toward him in a black overcoat that threw off the snow. The white felt hat was pulled down firmly over the forehead. He was shuffling, weaving, limping and almost falling. The man was not drunk, only stumbling and staying upright with difficulty in the icy snowstorm.

Frank Braun stepped toward him, giving the appearance as if he wanted to help. The man in black laughed at that –no, it was more of a growl, a slimy, drooling grunt. It rang in his ears like the fisherman's knife eviscerating and tearing a fish, so smooth and believable that he could almost smell the repulsive smell, –smooth and yet crunching and sliding. Very disgusting. –He recognized it at once. That was how his uncle laughed

–and the man in the Pullman car. He looked around –were there any black mice jumping through the snow?

No –there were none. But Frank Braun remained standing where he was, waiting, letting the man come up to him. But no, this man did not spit. He snarled past and grunted again. Now he could see the man's face in the street light. It was a Chinese, round and over fat. The man grabbed onto the iron fence and hung there, swaying as if on the railing of a listing ship. Then he bent down and sailed across, then diagonally, over the street and down toward China town.

Frank Braun watched after him. But the man did not spit. –no, the white carpet remained smooth. Only, now and then and then again the disgusting grunts hit his ears, before being torn to shreds, into pieces by the howling wind of the winter storm.

There were no more autos, no more wagons, busses or street cars. Empty, everything was empty, and the icy howling kept growing ever stronger. It would permit nothing to be in the streets except itself. It whipped at the snowflakes that spewed in from all sides, chased up and down the concrete walls, tore at the streetlamps, fences, benches and buildings. It also formed, just for a few minutes, fantastic figures all around the park, and then tore them apart again, creating and destroying at the same time.

One rose up like a mighty animal behind the snow covered fence in a leafless bush. It was a bear, an eternal polar bear, like the one he saw daily in the papers as Russian's rending symbol. And over there leaning against the street light, one stood in an overcoat, like some forgotten sentry in the winter night. Something protruded out from under his overcoat, black and pointed, like a bayonet. –Then from the west side came a new blast. It created new misty figures out of the snow –stormed across and pounded against the iron fence making it rattle. Now there was a new chase, and more, many more blindingly white figures grew out of the ground. They rushed toward him, at him, through him. The new snow crowded around him with more and more of them. They seized him, threw him to the ground, tore him around, like a clumsy frame and pinned him solidly to the white ground. Wearily he got onto his knees and crawled forward, groping, and crawling. While over him rode thousands, hundreds of thousands of white riders. They stopped, howled and screamed. –

And broke apart behind him on the iron fence. –

But just across the street –only thirty steps away –there was his club. –He could get warm there. Drink grog. Play poker.

Chapter Five: Turquoises

Spoke Rimnild, the king's little daughter:
"Knight in blue!
If my little mirror remains clear for you,
Then I am your true Frau!
If it appears cloudy,
My thoughts have not been pure.
If it has blood red spots,
Then take someone new:
Then I have given my maidenhood away,
Been unfaithful to you!

-The Ballad of Hind Horn
And Maid Rimnald (XIV century)

"But two turquoises – which they call Teuxihitl – take them roughly polished and set in silver, bound into a silver chain. Wear them over the left hip when you travel cross country to protect against robbers.
-Juan de Galdos (XVI century)

His secretary put the revolver in the leather handbag.
"No," said Frank Braun. "Put that one away. I won't need it."
Then he hesitated, held the weapon loosely in his hand.
"Or I could present it as a gift, it would be welcome enough."
But he hesitated again for a moment, "No, not this one. It is a German army revolver. They will not be able to say that I am smuggling weapons across the Rio Grande. Everything that the Mexicans will get will come from the Yankees themselves –so they will be getting American goods from me! There –down in that drawer –are enough Smith and Wesson's, take a good half dozen of them. And don't forget the bullets, five cartons with every weapon."
They packed the revolvers, the handbag became heavy enough.
"Should I call your dear friends?" asked his secretary. "You need to be leaving."
He nodded, "Yes, go get them! – are they already here?"

“All three!” laughed the other. “It will be quiet enough.”

He went to the window, pushed the curtains back and waved with a quick gesture. He was a young fellow, slender and clear eyed, scarcely twenty three, a roustabout, bright enough, competent and able to do anything that was needed. Perhaps a little scatterbrained and superficial when the girls spooked him in the head; but he always pulled himself back together when needed, found a way out of ticklish situations – and that was what was needed in his position. His name was Ernst Rossius; he had run away from school, traveled around three parts of the earth as a journalist and translator, a steward, sailor and stevedore – even as a land surveyor, whatever it took. Now he was stranded in the States, like so many thousands.

He had come to him one day and introduced himself.

“References?” asked Frank Braun out of habit.

That was the first question he always asked any visitor. Then he would take the letter, never even read it, but look at it, letting the other speak. That gave him enough time to form an impression.

“Here,” said the young man quickly.

He reached into a pocket, took out a bundle of papers and handed them to him. They were lyrical poems. There was a signature and date at the bottom of each.

Frank Braun grumbled, “Nice references – phooey, the devil!”

But he still read them. The poems were bad, unripe and sentimental, and yet – here and there was a ring, a short sentence – just a little bit more, that was of this fellow, Ernst Rossius and no one else. There was a “perhaps” that cried out from these verses.

“What can you do?” he asked.

The youngster said, “Anything, or nothing – however you take it. I can do anything, but nothing special.”

Again, that pleased him. He laughed.

“As far as I’m concerned, you can stay around if you want to.”

So he stayed.

The detectives came in. They were very anxious about the open trunk. Usually when he went away it was only for two or three days and he only took a large leather suitcase with. A couple of times in the beginning, he had brought one of them along, later, he only told them where he was going and where he would be speaking. After that they graciously took his report,

remained in New York, and stuck all the pretty travel expenses into their own pockets.

But this looked different.

“How long will you be gone?” asked the gaunt one suspiciously.

“One month, six weeks perhaps,” he answered.

“Oh, that long? Why? Where was he going?”

He had to have some peace and quiet, that was all. He had to be alone, had some work that he had to do himself. He wanted to be on the mainland, by the ocean.

But they didn’t believe a syllable. Oh, they were informed – more than he thought. He wanted to go to Canada, that was certain; to blow up the Welland Canal or some railroad bridge. The newspapers were full of it. A couple of attempts had already failed –but you know the Germans – they will try it again and again, until –

The short fat one lifted up the heavy suitcase – heavy, very heavy.

“Dynamite?” he asked timidly.

Then they implored him, almost begged him, heaven knows that he had already done enough. The Kaiser was already finished. It was lunacy, criminally rash to put his own life at risk. What if the damned Canadians caught him – executed him as a spy! –they would never be able to forgive themselves, for not having protected him better. They loved him so much –

“And your good jobs!” He laughed.

There was a knock. The old servant announced the mailman.

“Take him into the front room,” he commanded.

Then he turned to his secretary.

“Can you finish with these people?” He asked in German.

“I think so,” answered the youth.

He crossed the room and closed the door after him. He took receipt of his letter, signed for it. Then he told the postman that he was going to a seaside resort for a couple of weeks and that his secretary was authorized to sign for his mail. That was not entirely proper, but a few dollar bills quickly made things fine. Then a messenger came with a large bouquet of red roses and a little note with them. It was from Ivy Jefferson, little blonde Ivy Jefferson, whom he had been dating for a couple of months now. He knew her father and her mother – she played a role on Fifth Avenue and he played one on Wall Street.

He took the card from the roses – it was perfumed. The perfume smelled young and fresh, like the fresh flesh of eighteen year old Ivy Jefferson – the roses were a good omen. He held her firmly, this blonde Ivy, and with her, he held her father and mother –they had to do whatever she wanted, their spoiled, selfish, only child. And along with them – twenty other families, even more – it would be good insurance if something did happen to him down there. He held all of them – against their own inclinations – and only with this one little card; Ivy.

It had been her coming out day in February. The day on which she was introduced to the world, on which everyone in New York that belonged to high society had been there – oh, only the highest. A couple of years earlier in London he had been invited – just casually – in chatting. He must come over for it! And he had – at the time, replied, “Certainly, I will come to it!”

Now he was here, was in New York. One morning tall Tewes had brought in the newspapers, and all of them had a giant picture of blonde Ivy on them. Ivy Jefferson was being introduced into high society – ah, now that was more important than all the slaughters in Poland and France.

“Didn’t you once say that you knew the Jefferson’s?” asked the journalist. “Have you already visited them?”

He said, “No.”

“Then you must go there – today!”

And he wouldn’t give in, packed him up, and took him along with down to Wall Street, to the old offices of the Jefferson Bank.

“In there Doctor!” he cried.

He waited outside, pacing up and down with long strides until Frank Braun came back out.

“Well – what happened?” he asked. “Did he invite you?”

“Yes, he did,” he answered, “ungraciously enough!”

The journalist crowed, “I can only imagine! Only allies will be there – munitions people and bankers, financiers! You will be the only German – that is for certain.”

He rubbed his fingers together in satisfaction.

“Ah, I can just imagine the face old Jefferson must have made! Sweet and sour and sick – and yet cordial – and very resigned. He knew very well that what he was doing was wrong! But if he didn’t invite you – his precious spouse would be furious at his tactlessness and cowardice – and now that he has invited you, she will scold him just as much!”

He lit a big cigar, and blew the smoke away in thick clouds.

“But now comes the real thing, Doctor! You must court the Jefferson girl like the very devil, must push away all the others! The little brat holds many threads – or will hold them – if she doesn’t already know how! Apparently – she is entirely indifferent today; British or German! You must win her! The little one can be very useful to us – or to them. You see –”

And then he talked, explained things to him bluntly, and in quick sentences; between exhaled puffs of smoke, explained how the Jefferson Bank worked, in front of, and behind the curtains. He explained how the old stock exchange bear –and his wife, no less – would do anything for a smile from their little blonde daughter.

“How do you know all of this?” asked Frank Braun.

Tewes remained standing and waved his long arms in the air.

“Haven’t I been a political newspaper reporter here in New York City for over twenty three years now? Over there you need to know about the authorities – here it’s the families!”

Frank Braun received his invitation and went along with it because Tewes wanted him to, and even more because Lotte Van Ness urged him as well.

“Tewes is right, three times over,” she said. “Court her. Show her what you can do. Take her – give her her first kiss.”

“Kisses – without feelings!” He threw back at her.

“Bah,” she said. “What about it? Kisses are kisses – whether they are sincere or not.”

It was not difficult to play the rooster. There were a couple of French bankers and diplomats, but they were old, amusing enough, but completely unable to speak English. Then there were Italian artists, painters and singers, second class, all of them; boisterous and servile at the same time. There were also several Englishmen, with very good manners, quiet and cold. They were entertaining, but without humor, very polite and obliging, but it was always with an offensive manner.

“How good of me to come over here for you – now get packed!”

And the Americans, naturally there were many Americans. They were young fellows, well grown, healthy, large and powerful; these sons of the first houses – what a contrast they were to the hollow cheeked, narrow chested and flat-footed folk; those millions that spewed forth into the light from the subway day in and day out! – They were students of Harvard, Yale

and Princeton, who could row and ride, box and drive automobiles, play baseball and football and were just as good at hockey as they were at tennis. And there was no question that they wore their dinner jackets as easily as their polo shirts. There were no Jews there – none at all.

The Kaiser himself would have liked to ask Herren Ballin to breakfast, or the King of England, Sir Ernest Cassel! But this was an American house – one of the highest. The Russian Czar would have to ask Baron Gunzburg to tea, and play bridge with Herren Mandelbaum, before the richest Jew would ever cross over this threshold! He would be almost as much of an outsider here as he was, the German.

Ivy Jefferson stood there, near her parents, with a giant bouquet of orchids in her arms. She welcomed everyone, shook over four hundred hands, and said a hurried phrase to each one. He had come late enough, made his bow, took her hand. He knew from over in Europe that she understood German – so he spoke to her in his own language. Her father heard and immediately made a long face – threw a suspicious glance to his wife and then a very reproachful one at him. Then he greeted him distinctly cool in English. He replied, short and polite, and then turned back again to the girl and said smiling and loud enough for all to hear:

“Should I speak English? – your father is deathly afraid to have German spoken in his house.”

At that, little Ivy – spoke in German – hesitating and broken, but still in German.

“Today is my day. Speak German!”

He said, “Thank you.” And turned around to go.

But she held him back, intentionally and openly. Oh, she was fully grown up now, was “in high society.” And from this hour on, was independent of all others, and of her parents. She had to show them – and this was her first opportunity. And – just for something to talk about – she spoke:

“Everyone has said a couple of things about my appearance to me – you haven’t said a word. Do I please you?”

He measured her in a tenth of a second.

“Much,” he said slowly, “very much! Only – your maid is a goose.”

“Why do you say that?” She asked.

He pulled his lips down into a frown.

“You have a loose thread – just a little one, right there, where a conch shell should be.”

She turned red – he could see that very well, even under the makeup and powder. Her gaze met his, offended and hurt – then flew over to her shoulder. She bit her teeth together –

“Oh,” she whispered.

Then she turned sharply away – left him standing, and pushed away the outstretched hand of another. He left, lost himself among the people. He considered for a moment –then nodded in satisfaction. He thought:

“That went well. Two hundred men shook her hand – they all said the same things. She will notice me.”

He sat at a table, somewhere in the back of the Gothic dining room. He ate a little, drank, spoke with a few highly indifferent people; then crossed over with them into the winter garden, then into the ballroom, and stood over to one side, entirely alone, watching. Yes, they could dance, these American youngsters; back and forth, regular, always the same, soulless, without any passion, infinitely boring – but lithe, untiring and for hours. He stood there and waited. He saw her pass by, two times, five times, many times. She looked over at him, but did not nod to him. Several times when she sat out a couple of minutes, it seemed to him as if her eyes looked confused – inviting at first, then angry – then inviting again. Why didn’t he come over to ask her for a dance? But he just stood there, quiet, unmoving, watching and waiting, scornful, and a little bored. Oh no, it was not intentional with him. He just let things happen as they would. He waited. He thought, “She will come.”

Again she danced past – then the music broke off. She came over toward him with her partner, holding him tight and stood there.

“There, look!” She said.

A small black shell was pinned to her shoulder.

“That is lovely!” He nodded.

She introduced her partner, a tall student. She reached out her hand and asked for a cigarette. Then she took his arm, and dismissed the other.

“Don’t you dance?” She asked.

“No,” said Frank Braun.

She tried again, “I’m a little tired – I would like some ice cream. Come on!”

This was the opportunity, now, but nothing occurred to him, and he didn't say anything. He thought, "If Tewes saw me! – Ass – he would say – idiot!"

But she wouldn't give up.

"Can we speak English – when we are alone? It will be so much easier for me."

He nodded lightly, "As you like."

Again, there was a pause; He brought her some ice cream. They sat down at a little table far back in a corner, and she tried again.

"I have been thinking about you – so very reserved sometimes – and so different."

He considered.

He asked, "What were you thinking yesterday?"

She laughed, "Papa and Mama fought for over an hour because of you – you are dangerous. You are a conspirator."

"Bah," he said, "I am harmless enough."

She shook her head.

"No," she cried. "That you are not. Our maid is from Vienna – she knows about you. Mama has asked her questions. They have warned me about you."

He glanced over at her, "And?" He asked.

She laughed, "That's why I'm sitting here."

He didn't answer. He looked at her, slowly and quietly. She talked, and talked, but he wasn't listening. She was dark blonde. Her hair was combed back in large waves. Her eyebrows were a little too heavy – but her eyes themselves were gray and beautiful, her nose was narrow and well formed, with a nervous twitch in her nostrils. Her mouth was small; her upper lip pleasantly curved. Her throat was a little too long; her shoulders a bit too drooping and not full enough. Her breasts were flat, much too flat. And yet she was beautiful – so young – still in her first bloom.

"Why are you staring at me?" She cried. "Say something."

Then he held her eyes with his, quietly, until she became still.

"What do you want?" She asked.

He didn't release her, said, "I came here – because of you."

She put on a smile that broke in the middle.

"Because of you –" He repeated.

Someone came up and asked her to dance.

Then he said – but it rang like a question, “I’m going to leave now.”

She stood up and shook hands.

Then she said, “Come for tea – on – on – the day after tomorrow!”

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Again he raised up the roses – each stem was a meter long – American beauties. He inhaled their perfume – then laid them in front of him on the table, grabbed her note and tore it up. He had gone to tea with Ivy Jefferson. He had been alone with her – only once did her mother come in, just for a few minutes. No, he had not courted her, most definitely not. He was not nice to her, not charming. But his green eyes could compel –sometimes – especially if it was his day – and that day had been a good one for him. He had caressed her hand and arm with light fingers.

He had become a good friend to their house. He went over there two or three times every week. He went to the opera with her, went riding with her. Much too often, he thought. She takes up too much of my time –

But she said, “Much too little! You are my beau – and you have to come every day. She had to have her declared beau – like every lady of the New York high society – that was a given. Yet she, Ivy Jefferson, took a German – during these times.

Her father was furious about it; her mother even more. But then, amazingly soon, they got used to it. And Frau Alice Jefferson declared to her beau, the English general counsel – that she found what her daughter had done very stylish, and very courageous. Really, very courageous.

Even more, she became very kind and cordial to him. Not only that – she really invited him, but became accustomed to him – just like little Ivy wanted. Only once did her mother attempt to make a serious proposal to her.

“Does it have to be a German?” She cried.

“Should I take an Italian?” Her daughter came back at her. “Make myself ridiculous?”

“No, no, not a Dago. But there were so many Englishmen there, Canadians, Frenchmen and Belgians, even a couple of Russians. They agreed that it could not be an American. Little Ivy got that from her, an instinctive, disdainful contempt for all men of her own country; which she

shared with so many other ladies of high society. Oh yes, they were very good at the office – could create money in one way or the other, and in thousands of ways. But as men? – Not one of all these ladies would come out and say it –and yet it hung in the air everywhere.

It was different with Americans – different than with foreigners. Foreigners made their nostrils tremble, a shine come to their eyes – something was missing in these American men of high society – almost all of them. They were made from good wood –many out of bronze or solid stone. They were well-dressed and well grown, had muscles and sinews and yet –

His friend, the attaché to the Spanish delegation, put it quite well.

"They have no balls!" He laughed.

That was it, most certainly, that alone. And the women noticed it, felt it – consciously and unconsciously. They were asexual – or else masturbated from youth –had no feelings, no excitement, and no red blood. Much less any taste – and even more: they were so unrefined about it, were without culture and ignorant. The ladies of society stood much higher than them. They looked down upon the American male – but the European was their equal – and stood higher than most. And also – even more importantly –he gave her thrills.

Thrills – and excitement, great or small; a tickle in the blood and in the nerves – a something that whipped it up. No American could do that.

He read Ivy's letter – three pages – in large stylish handwriting. It was very hateful of him, that he was going away. It was very mean and low down! Why didn't he come with them to Newport? And did he think she couldn't find out what he was up to? She would find out – even if it cost her $50,000! And she was not sending him any gifts – no. She would not do that!

He hesitated, sat down, and wrote her. If she took even one step to seek him out she would never see him again. He had his reasons – and if she was smart – she would understand. He thanked her for the roses – he would take them along. He would be back soon enough – and he sent her many kisses. Seven – and then one more. He put the letter in an envelope, wrote the address and then called his secretary. The secretary came with the detectives who were happy and grinning.

"There, you see!" Cried Ernst Rossius, "Roses and a little note."

The short, fat one stepped up to him, “Very delightful Doctor! Please, if you would –I would like one for my wife!”

Frank Braun took the roses, and divided them into three equal piles – then gave some to each of the three rascals.

“Do you have a wife too?” He asked the gaunt one.

“No,” he said. “But I know a girl!”

The secretary quickly shoved the check at him.

“Sign this,” he said. “$300 for your people.”

He signed his name to the check, gave it to one of them, shook three hands and said, “so long –” three times.

“That was cheap enough!” He cried after they were outside. “How did you do it?”

Rossius laughed, “It’s too bad that you gave away all the roses. You could have given me a couple for my virginal bride.”

“Still the same one?” He asked.

The youth shook his head, “No. A different one – since last week! –

There – the roses – that’s what he had needed! I told the fellows a bunch of lies. You are having a love affair – very secret. Naturally! And you are going on a little honeymoon with the lady! That lightened them up – and the roses strengthened their belief. Then there was the hundred dollars for each of them –

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Frank Braun stayed at Torreon, in the state of Chihuahua. He met up with his escort in Monterey. They traveled southward toward Veracruz to General Carranza. They were agreed upon who they wanted to meet; who they wanted to work with. They would remain together and travel from Villa to Carranza, or somewhere else – if the other was too suspicious to meet with them. He was even at first agreeable to traveling even further down to the third of the three possibilities, the short and hot eyed Emiliano Zapata, who held Guerrero, Michoacan and Morales.

But it would take too much time, that was certain and he would never push to the north, not him! He was a snazzy dresser in the garb of a robber, one that decorated himself and his little horse with silver, kissed the girls and danced the Jarape, drank a lot of pulque and swirled his mustache up

high into the air. He would never push further north and Jepsen knew that as well as he did. It would be better to travel to the northwest than down there.

Nippon's agents were working here. He waited. Poncho Villa had to come, tomorrow, or the next day – from Durango. Maybe next week or the week after that – but he would come. He had given orders for his people to come here from all parts of the country, and his name was supposed to be worth something. This was supposed to be a show of force, like an army, and they gathered, officers and generals, with small and large troops. They camped in the city and outside of it, in Gomez, Palacio and Lerdo.

Frank Braun rode around through the camp, made friends, and chatted all day long. He had brought along all kinds of trifles from out of New York, exploding cigars, fireworks, wooden matches that would not light and other novelties. He presented them to the officers. Oh, he knew his Mexicans! They were happy as children, and laughed like schoolboys; those, whose dirty fingers were so sticky with human blood.

He sounded them out – that was easy enough. They were all for Villa. Oh, certainly, he was the strongest man. But no one had the slightest idea what he was up to. Anarchy was in their heads like it was everywhere else in this land, and only in one thing, one single point did they all agree. Every soldier, from the generals down to the last mule skinner, every little fruit vendor and boot polisher, every lawyer and politician, even every woman, from the signora's down to the bordello prostitutes –

That was the hatred, the deep embedded hatred against the Yankees. Scarcely one of them could even imagine how everything could be made right. But they knew very well that everything was the way it was because of the Americans, from the very first day. That's where the money came from, and the weapons which had overthrown the mighty Diaz. With him fell Madero, Gutierrez and Huerta. And the Carranza people, whom they were fighting against, had American money, and shot at them with Yankee bullets.

And themselves, the ones that rode for Villa? Well – them too, really! That was just it! They devoured the entire country; they burned, murdered, robbed and stole. It was all such a shame – and only one benefited, the gringo, the American. And there would be no quiet, no peace anymore; they would continue to battle on with both sides killing each other. That's what Wall Street and Washington wanted – and that's what would happen. Everyone was solidly convinced of it.

If only someone would come and lead them; oh, in the blink of an eye, they would all become one; the Villistas, Zapatists, Carranzists and Diaz's people; all of them, every one of them, from Sonora to the Yucatán. That was the only hope of salvation, the last salvation for this bleeding, miserably torn apart country, an outside battle, a war against the miserable conscienceless gringo, who in so few years had made their beautiful, rich blooming land into the most miserable place on earth. But why? For what reason? What did their enemy, the gringo want? Oh, they knew, and they never got tired of speaking about it.

The gringo wanted their land, wanted, Sonora, Coahuila, Chihuahua and rich Tamalpais with its oilfields. They wanted to rob them and steal from them, like they once stole California, New Mexico, Texas and Arizona. But they were much too cowardly to simply take it. They worked in the background, inciting them against each other; let them shoot each other, one after another, through the long years. Then, when there were scarcely any more men in the entire land that could carry a gun; that was when the brave Yankees would come. Then there would be peace. Then they would take whatever they wanted! –That was gringo politics.

They poured the agave schnapps down in large glasses; pounded on the tables with their fists, spit and screamed and made a fuss. And then – one and then another gave a sob, and cried.

"Oh, it would be much better, when the gringos finally came! Everything would then be at an end, soon enough."

They moaned implacably, like one of the bulls that is down on its knees with the blade of the Espada standing high between its horns, and longingly waiting for the quick mercy stroke of the Puntillero.

And yet the New York newspapers still screamed: "Germans incite Mexico against the states."

Germans? Oh sure! –Here, there was only one that incited, one –and that was the Yankee.

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The next Sunday Villa rode in. They had decorated the city, torn carpets and colored bed sheets hung from out of the windows. Also a few banners fluttered around. The people remained in their houses, but several

prostitutes lounged against the windows and in the doorways. They laughingly replied to the spicy taunts of the incoming men. The men rode and raced through the streets, without much order, as they pleased. They were tattered and torn, colorfully armed, and all of them were wearing their large pointed hats.

He stood on the little balcony, looking down – the general had not yet passed by. There was a knock at the door.

“Come in!” He cried and turned around.

An officer came through the door, tall, with a mighty eagle nose and it occurred to him that at least the man was smooth shaven.

“Please excuse this interruption,” he said, politely enough. “I must arrest you.”

He asked, “Who are you?”

“I am the general’s adjutant,” cried the other. “I am very sorry – but I must take you away.”

“Who gave the command?” He demanded.

The adjutant said, “I, myself; you are a stranger from out of the United States. You have no papers. We must investigate the case – please, follow me.”

Frank Braun observed the other carefully. He wore high, new, leather chaps – had three revolvers stuck in his belt. In his hand swung a small, elegant riding quirt. No jacket, no vest, the blue shirt was dusty and sweat stained. It stood half open, and there he saw a piece of white wool with blue horizontal stripes.

“An Arba Kanfot?” Asked Frank Braun.

[Translator’s note: a Jewish prayer shawl]

The stranger hesitated.

“No one in Mexico has ever asked me that.”

He stepped up to the window and turned around toward the room so that he could get a good look at him in the full light.

“Are you also?” He continued, “No, no – you are a German!”

Frank Braun nodded, “Yes, I am. And your investigation can easily take place here, if it’s all right with you! Please, would you take your place?”

They both sat down, spoke together, and quickly understood each other. Frank Braun explained that he knew Villa; had ridden with him in Sonora years ago when they had gone up against the Maltorena. What did he want now? Well now, you see, it was like the mood here in this country – which

mood? For Villa or Carranza – or someone else? – No, he didn't care about that at all – he was interested in only one sentiment, the one toward Washington – for or against? –

"You hate the Yankees?" Asked adjutant.

"Should I love them?" He retorted. "Their bullets are striking down thousands of my countrymen."

It came out hesitatingly, "I am from New York."

"From Hester Street?" Asked Frank Braun.

The other laughed out loud.

"You know the difference! Not exactly from Hester Street – but not very far from there."

He became thoughtful.

"I am an American citizen – still today. And I was one body and soul – as a child, a young boy, and as a youth. I believed rock solid in equality and freedom and justice – in the great symbol in New York harbor – and could do nothing that was not for the stars and stripes. Until –"

He hesitated.

And Frank Braun repeated, "Until?"

The adjutant said, "Until I saw that it was all a cheeky lie and a doggone swindle! You see, sir; I was born to be a soldier – have never dreamed of being anything else. My father was furious about it, but my mother was happy – she said that I had Makkaber blood. I was cut out for it and my mother set it up so that I could enlist with the 71st Regiment when I was 20 years old. That was not a regular troop, just a volunteer regiment, a National Guard unit, which drilled a couple of times a month. But they gave us uniforms, guns and sabers. I reeked of being a soldier! – Posters hung everywhere, on all corners. They distributed enticing flyers from the publicity offices! It was the duty of every patriotic citizen! At that time I was patriotic down into my bones. It was my duty, so I enlisted."

He laughed out loud, and swung the riding quirt lightly through the air.

"They examined me – and the doctor said that I was a splendid fellow, of whom the entire regiment could be proud. But then – after only two days – the decision came – that I was unfit, physically unfit! I howled throughout the entire night – immediately ran to our old doctor to have another physical examination.

No man in New York was as healthy as I was, he declared. I saved my weeks wages, went to the best doctors in the city, let them handle me and

touch me for hours. I received a magnificent collection of testimonials – which I sent to the Regiment. But the decision came again; unfit! They didn't want me, refused me – because I was a Jew. Not once did they want a Jew as a common soldier!"

He jumped up and shoved his arm under Frank Braun's nose.

"Feel that!" He cried.

Frank Braun grabbed it. The muscles were like steel. Then the Jew lifted up his right leg.

"Feel these – more solid legs have never encircled a horse."

Again he asked him to seize his leg, attempt to pinch the flesh. But it was impossible – it was chiseled out of stone.

"Any bow-legged, flat-footed counter boy can limp through New York's streets in the brown uniform," he cried. "But they didn't want me – because I was circumcised! – I was – unfit!"

He fell back heavily into the chair, and whistled out a couple bars of the national anthem. They taught me in school that Yankee land was the most majestic and the freest in the entire world. Presumably they thought that any Jew would be joyful and thankful for all eternity that an ocean separated him from the lashes of the Czar's whip. But my father's home was not in Russia, we came here from Galicia. His brother was a Rabbi – made a little money with petroleum in the Ukrainian country near Selez. Then he went to Vienna – and all of his boys went to school, received a far better education than I ever had. One is an engineer, one a student at the University and two, two are – lieutenants! Today, all four of them are standing in a battlefield, fighting against the murderers of our people. That is better than in the New York ghetto – where you can only tear your mouth off!"

His riding quirt struck a sharp blow through the air.

"I read New York newspapers that a friend sometimes sends down to me. Every day they preach it – just like that time in school – America is the freest land in the world! Germany and Austria are enslaved and reactionary countries, the last and the worst places to be on earth. But my cousins are officers there – and here I am not good enough to be common soldier!"

He bent his switch as if he wanted to break it. He bit his teeth together, sobbed, choked, and then breathed deeply. He jumped up quickly and offered his hand.

“You know my chief?” He cried. “Good! I will pick you up this afternoon and bring you to him. Then we can converse some more – if you like.”

Frank Braun returned the strong grip.

“Your name?” He asked.

The Jew laughed, “De Piedraperla” – “How do you like that? My parents in New York are named Pearlstone – my cousins overseas are named Perlstein – so say Perlstein – it sounds better.”

He opened the door, and turned back one more time.

“After everything else I have entirely forgotten to ask what you really want here,” he cried. “But, if your mission is to incite against the Yankees – you are completely welcome! Day and night, no one here dreams of anything else, other than the hatred against the gringos who have ruined this land.”

Frank Braun remained waiting in his room until evening. But the adjutant didn’t come. Then he saddled up his horse, rode out to the camp and asked for Villa’s quarters. He soon found it. The general was housed in a hacienda in front of the city. The overgrown garden teamed with soldiers. They stood, sat and laid around, sucking on their cigarette stubs. He asked for Villa’s adjutant, Colonel Piedraperla. But no one knew the name; no one could give him any information. Curious and ready to help, they came up in a large circle around his horse. What did this man look like? Slender, tall, smooth shaven, elegant, sunburned, black eyes and hair. – They rode back and forth – and couldn’t find him.

“He has a nose like this,” he cried, and drew a mighty arc in the air.

Then they laughed and jumped around in joy, like schoolchildren. Oh, they knew him well, the one with the big nose! That was Don Benjamino – naturally! –and they called out, screamed out everywhere. “Don Benjamino!”

So he was named Benjamin as well – Benjamin Perlstein, thought Frank Braun. Then a sweat covered horse flew through the crowd. The rider reined in, jumped down and threw the reins to a soldier.

“Ah, there you are.” He cried. “I came straight from your room, had already thought the wait might have been too long for you.” –“You must excuse me. We all had our hands full this afternoon.”

He took his arm and led him to the house.

“The general is very sullen today,” he said. “In a bad mood and wild. – He’s got the dancer in his craw!”

He laughed and gave a good kick at a soldier that lay sleeping under the steps.

“Yes, a Spanish dancer – damned beast! She has our heads turned around, Poncho Villa, me and all the others. She gives her favors to no one – is cold like the ice water that you put on all the tables in New York.”

Frank Braun looked up, “Now, openly stating – not one of you seems like someone that would let a wench have her way for very long.”

“It is normally not that way with us,” answered the colonel. “Most certainly not! But she compels us – the devil knows how! Everyone is jealous of the others; so everyone is her protector – It’s too bad you didn’t come eight days sooner; you could have seen a good welt on my cheek – which the smooth Dolores herself carved in it. She calls herself Goyita. I grabbed her around the body – she tore my own quirt away from me. Villa and Perez Domingo and all the others were rolling around with laughter! But I can console myself. She has distributed many more lashes than that here. The soldiers call her “la Pegona”, the whip, – they would all run through fire for her!”

They entered the house, went through a large patio in which a couple of thirsty plants stood on the marble piles. Yellow curtains hung in front of a high doorway, nearby a couple of soldiers saluted – Don Benjamino pulled the curtains back, called out a couple of words into the completely dark room and from in back came a half curse, a deep, almost unintelligible grunt. The Jew let the curtain fall.

“Let’s go,” he said. “It will be better if we leave him alone today. He invited you tomorrow, to Jaripeo at the arena and after that to the evening meal here – his mood will be better then and you will have better cooperation from him, better results.”

Colonel Perlstein whistled for his horse.

“Would you like to ride around a bit before the sun sets?” He suggested.

They jumped onto their animals and rode at a slow pace through the garden. They stopped at the gate; the adjutant went up to an officer and gave a couple of commands. Then a strange dizziness seized Frank Braun. He heard the voice of the colonel, every word and every syllable. But it was as if he spoke in some foreign language which he didn’t understand. And

then all feeling left him everywhere at the same time. His legs no longer gripped the Mexican wooden saddle – they hung in the blue. His hands didn't hold the reins anymore; they fell slack on the animal's neck.

It seemed to him as if he didn't have another drop of blood in his body. He slowly collapsed forward. An officer sprang up, grabbed onto him and straightened him up. And – just as he felt the human contact, the grip of a strong fist around his wrist – it was over. He could grab the reins again – sit upright in the saddle.

"What is wrong with you?" Cried the adjutant. "Man, you look like a bed sheet!"

He shook his head – "Just a slight dizziness –I'm all right now."

But the Jew was not satisfied.

"We will ride back to the house – that will be better! Tell me – what have you eaten today?"

"No, no, my stomach is in fine shape – today, as always."

"If you – have been poisoned! Even the best stomach won't help that. And many things are possible here at this time with us."

Frank Braun smiled and shook his head. He just wanted to rest – it was a slight weakness of the nerves that he had been suffering from for several months now.

"That could be," said the colonel, "but it might not be. You are now under my protection – let me take care of it."

He helped him down from the horse, led him up the stone steps into the hotel, and brought him to his room.

"Lay down on the bed," he cried. "Sleep it off for a couple of hours. I will come to see you later."

He left. Frank Braun listened through the open door, heard how he shouted downstairs for the innkeeper, then called out for a soldier to come in from the street. He spoke Spanish with him, mixed with a couple of Indian words. It was a Yaqui, thought Frank Braun.

"You," commanded the adjutant. "You stay here. Stay in the kitchen – anytime something is cooked for the gentleman there! –the stranger, you know, the tall one! Do you know him?"

"Yes," cried the Indian, "the blonde."

"Yes, him," continued the colonel. "You keep watch; you understand; nothing gets into his food that does not belong there! Cook double portions – and taste everything yourself. Eat half of everything!"

“Yes, Colonel!” Cried the Yaqui.

He was very satisfied with such good duty. Then Perlstein turned to the innkeeper.

“Did you hear – what I commanded the soldier? – we have suspicions! And you are responsible to me! – you are! If something happens – on the wall with you! So watch out for yourself!”

He didn’t wait for an answer, went quickly out into the street and sprang onto his mare. There was excited chatter from the patio. Frank Braun stood up and shut the door. He was not tired, no. Just empty, empty – oh so empty! It was the same feeling that he had had in Philadelphia when he was supposed to speak against Livingstone. That time when he kissed Farstin – that time – and then again when he came back from the opera with Lotte – and again when he –

More often now – more often. Sometimes stronger or weaker – but never as strong as today. But he consoled himself. Hadn’t he been healthy again now for several weeks? So healthy that he could not at all imagine how he could be so tired with this emptiness! Then it occurred to him that Lotte Van Ness had given him an envelope as he was leaving. There were a couple of powders in it. She had said that in case he had a strong attack to take a little strychnine – and he should only take some if it was really needed –

Where had he stuck it? He searched in his pockets and found the envelope in his briefcase. He tore it open, took out one of the paper packets, shook the white powder onto his tongue and washed it down with a gulp of water. Now to rest a little –

The envelope seemed heavy to him, he shook out the contents. Four paper packets of powder, a sheet of paper and there, wrapped in cotton and in a sheath of the finest leather was a very little pocket knife. He took the letter and read it. There was Lotte’s quick, wild scrawl,

“I beg you, take this little knife, and wear it in the left breast pocket of your shirt for my sake. It is entirely new and very clean –the blade is polished and without any stain. You must not use it. Bring it back to me – as it is. It won’t mean anything to you, but it will mean everything to me.”

He took out the knife, opened the single blade. It was platinum; one side showed the image of a scorpion; the other the image of a little crab. The magnificent steel edge gleamed in the last rays of the evening sun. It was so polished that he could see his reflection perfectly, like in a mirror.

The edge was very pointed and sharp as a razor. What did she want with this? He thought. But he did it – he carefully wrapped it back up and put it in the soft leather sheath – and into the little breast pocket of his shirt on the left side, over his heart.

Chapter Six: Sapphires

"Lucrezia Borgia, hour by hour,
Your beauty, your virtue, your honest fame,
And fortune will grow no less,
With each youth you plant in the ground."
-Ariost.

Yâkut al acfar, d. i. the sapphire,
Allows the chaste to remain chaste
Through all temptations.
-Mohammed ibn al Khabîb.

It was the high general's name day, the day of his patron saint, Francis of Caracole. On this Monday the army was Villa's guest – as well as the entire population of the city. Whoever wanted could come out to the bullfight arena. There was going to be a great game for the people today, not just the national Jaripeo. It was going to be enlarged and embellished through the showmanship of the Spanish Goyita.

The large amphitheater had not suffered much damage in the fighting. Only the part of the grandstands exposed to the sun had been shot to pieces. But Villa's men had worked on it feverishly during the past few weeks and a huge grandstand had been built to accommodate several more thousands of people. The boxes on the shady side had remained undamaged. They were all decorated for the occasion with large banners of green, white and red, Mexico's colors.

The dictator's box was still empty. Frank Braun and a couple of generals sat in an adjoining one. The stands around the circular arena held more than five rows of seats. The crowd all sat or stood waiting. Many could not find seats and had to stand wherever they could find room. The entire side in the sun was reserved for the soldiers with all their weapons, wild and daring; tattered and torn.

But many still wore, despite the heat of the sun, their colored serapes, a large heavy cloth with the head cut exactly in the middle, which hung down on all sides.

They were almost only pure Indians, from thirty tribes; scarcely a drop of white blood was there. Large pointed hats were everywhere, reddish brown faces beneath them with black spots for eyes and a wide line of gleaming white teeth. On both sides. thousands of seductive women, in glaringly loud shawls, loosened for hours in the middle of the day; flesh, flesh for the greedy eyes of the soldiers.

Then in the shade, in the boxes and the rows below them were the officers; in amongst them were a couple of civilian families with their women – those that passed for the higher class in Torreon. They threw their large, long fringed silk scarfs over the balustrade.

There was no yelling, no frolicking or celebrating. It was still, everyone stared, listening in tense expectation. A great game in the old arena, for the first time after so many years!

The body guards came up, twenty sinewy fellows; Yaqui Indians, the best wood for fighters. Shotguns, pistols, sabers and machetes, with bullet belts around their bodies and others crossed over their breast – weapons for killing, wherever a man could stick them.

Then a trumpet blew, terribly off key, but resounding through the wide amphitheater – then he came, the general, the dictator, the master: Francisco Villa.

He, whom they lovingly called Paco and Pancho, Frasco and Curro; Also Paquito, Frasquito, Panchito and Currito, flattering names of endearment for the more formal sounding Francisco.

He, whom they all knew, began his stealing at four years of age, rebranded his first steer at eight and made his debut as a robber at twelve. He had gone to prison for the first time at fourteen, and broken out; and was already a murderer at fifteen.

He, Villa, who could neither write nor read, and could only scrawl his name with difficulty; who in spite of all that had become great and very powerful.

He had began with a corn rick – today he laid entire cities in ashes. A lame goatherd that had testified against him was his first sacrifice – but now he often slaughtered a hundred in a day. It was said of him – with shudders and yet with great admiration – that in Durango he had lined up one hundred and twenty-three captured Huerta officers in a long line, their hands tied behind their backs. That he had walked down the entire row of men placing his revolver against their temples and shooting them one by

one. One hundred and twenty-three – him alone – and scarcely needing half a minute for each one.

Who else in the entire land could do that – who, who in the entire world?

Him, only him, Pancho Villa –

They didn't applaud for him, didn't stand up, and didn't cry out. They just looked at him, spellbound, stared at him, still and silent, astonished, enraptured, and blinded in undisguised adoration of such savage greatness.

Frank Braun thought: "They are right. He is a murderer a thousand times, cruel and coarse, a human butcherer and executioner. He is a robber and thief and a rapist and brand changer and a wild drunk. Oh yes, – he is all that and does not try to hide it. But he is great in everything that he does, towering above everything else that surrounds him. He is powerful; he is great – to the children of this land.

The dictator sat down close to the balustrade. He didn't shake any hands, didn't greet anyone. He looked over the colorful masses, not in distain – but indifferently.

Again came the hoarse bugle call – and a small door opened on the sunny side. The Alguacil, in old Spanish costume, with a black Velasquez hat on his head and ornamental dagger at his side, rode out across the sands on a black mare. He stopped before the general's box, took off his hat, and asked with a formal gesture for permission to begin the show.

Don Benjamino stood behind the dictator, and handed him a shapeless, old key. Pancho Villa turned around – there, next to the colonel, was a soldier standing with a little basket. He stroked his stubbled chin – then handed back the key, waved the man forward, and lay back in his chair.

The soldier came forward and unpacked his basket. He first took out a towel, tolerably clean, which he placed around the general's shoulders. Then he took the shaving basin, with the half cut out opening for the neck, poured some water into it from a small container, added soap to it and began to whip up some lather.

Ah – the Herr Generalissimo was going to have a shave.

Colonel Perlstein came over to the partition between the two boxes and reached out his hand to Frank Braun.

"He is accustomed to getting a shave every Saturday," he whispered. "But yesterday he was in such a bad mood that he kicked the man out. That

is why I brought him along today. – you shall see that the general looks much more human after he has been freshly shaved.”

The soldier put his basin against the dictator’s neck and began to lather him; without rushing, thoroughly, with professional flourishes. The general was holding still, but suddenly he sat up straight – pushing the basin away.

“I’m thirty,” said Pancho Villa.

They filled a large tumbler with dirty yellow agave brandy and handed it to him. He took a strong gulp, swished it around in his mouth, and spit the stuff out over the balustrade. Then he took a second gulp, leaned back and half closed his eyes. But when the barber came back with his basin and was bending over him, he quickly sat up, pursed his thick lips together and sprayed the pulque into his face.

He bellowed with laughter, clapped his hands together and enjoyed his joke like a schoolboy. The soldier calmly wiped his face and grinned with him – and everyone nearby laughed. But not submissively, not servile and beaten down – no, openly, genuinely and heartily. It really was a good joke, you had to admit.

Then the general drank for the first time – three large glasses of the dirty looking pulque. Then he leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. And the soldier applied his brush, lathered, lathered and lathered, enough for an entire regiment. Then he took his razor.

Down below the black dressed city clerk was waiting on his nag, hat in his hand. In the back, beneath the seats in the sun, waited the bull, horses, riders and fighters – all around the mighty arena the large masses listened in silence. There was not a sound – only watching in silence and waiting. Pancho Villa was having his shave.

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Then he was finished. Still a little washing, drying, rubbing – powder, bluish-white powder in large amounts. And two glasses of agave schnapps. Then he threw the key into the sand.

Painfully the bowlegged, black dressed Alguacil crawled down from his horse and picked up the key, climbed back into the saddle, and slid off the other side. The crowd laughed – that was an old joke, which the city clerk had to do, as if he couldn’t ride.

The adjutant waved Frank Braun over, and introduced him to the general. But he remembered right away: He was the German that was there when they fled from Hermosillo back to Ures! He, the one that had given him the beautiful cigarette case! That was gone now; someone had stolen it from him. If he could only catch the fellow!

Frank Braun thought: How stupid that I didn't think of that! Why didn't I bring another one from New York? – It was a silvery, horribly tasteless cigarette case, that someone had given him to pay off a poker debt. But all the Mexicans loved to look at it, because it had – in cheap enamel –two naked women on it.

Again the gate in the back opened – solemnly the procession of performers marched through the sand; at the same time, behind the box, a small band began to play, making a confused noise on a variety of musical instruments.

Colonel Perlstein said, "The only other song they play is the Marseillaise, the general's favorite – this one is in your honor!"

Frank Braun tried hard to make out the melody.

"This one?" he replied. "But that is the Spanish King's March!"

The adjutant cried, "Really! But it is the only German piece that the band can play."

He looked at him expectantly, and Frank Braun asked, "Why is it German?"

Then the colonel laughed in satisfaction, genuinely pleased with himself.

"Don't you know who the composer was? – I know who! It was a Prussian king: Fredrick the Great."

He looked at him in astonishment, but Don Benjamino nodded powerfully.

"It is really true – just ask for yourself, when you are back in Europe. And – believe me – the king would sooner take a place in Villa's head, than either Marat or Robespierre would have!"

The colorful assembly came across the round arena. Leading in the front was the city clerk dressed in black velvet, behind him, fat and heavy, with long lances and round felt hats, which looked like the barber's shaving basin, came a couple of Picadores. The remainder came on foot.

In front, entirely in white, was him, the one who played Don Tancredo. Then two Espadas and a half dozen Banderilleros. They were all dressed in

Spanish bull fighting costumes, blue, rose, green and violet, and decorated with lots of gold and silver – with a colored cloth over their left arms. There was only one dressed in black, the one that gave the mercy stroke, the Puntillero.

And then, on magnificent animals, came four riders – Mexicans. Giant hats, long leather chaps and immense spurs. Pieces of silver and silver plating hung on everything –on the harness of the horses, as well as on the clothing of the men. A fifth one followed them, even richer, more elaborately dressed, his hat was even larger, and the silver wheels of his spurs were even larger than those of the others. He rode a snow white Arabian full-blood from Andalusia – oh, a majestic animal!

"That is Vasquez Cabrera," the adjutant shouted at him. "You will see what he can do."

Behind him trudged the Chulos, a crowd of lousy fellows in red jackets and caps, the last one was with the Quadriga, the four mules, colorfully decked out in red, green and white. They were used to remove the dead horses and bulls from out of the arena.

But the procession was not yet over. Behind all the men, entirely alone, walked a slender woman.

"That is the Goyita," cried Don Benjamino, "Dolores Echevarria, the Whip!"

She wore the clothing of a Texas cowboy, genuine enough, with only a short leather skirt instead of chaps. And tightly wound over her face was a very heavy brown veil.

"Why the mask?" asked Frank Braun.

Colonel Perlstein laughed, "She is whiter than the snow and doesn't want to ruin her complexion in the sun! That is the real secret – everyone here finds it completely understandable."

The long procession marched through the middle, and then stopped in front of the dictator's box. They stiffly took off their hats; the general waved his hand at them. But when the Spanish Senorita came, he clapped with his strong fists.

They circled, marched and rode around past the grandstand, slowly and solemnly. And the women and men greeted them with applause and screamed as they went by. Still once more back through the middle, then over to the sunny side – and down back through their gate.

The Chulos rolled a round, white painted wash tub in the sand, and placed it exactly in the middle of the arena, bottom up. And with heavy steps, Don Tancredo came up and climbed onto it. His uniform was old Spanish like the Alguacil's, but white, entirely white, from his hat to his shoes. He wore white gloves, and white flour clung to his face. He crossed his arms over his chest – an unmoving pillar of gypsum.

Then they let the first bull into the arena. He ran up, straight up, in a wild charge, his horns deeply lowered. Yet then he stopped, as always, standing right in front of the white tub, and didn't touch it. Raised his head, sniffed at it – no, it was not alive. And he turned around, looked around, swung his tail, and dug into the sand with his front hoofs.

Those were the rules; that's how every bullfight in Mexico began. But now something special happened in honor of the dictator and to the great joy of his people. Don Tancredo took a step forward – seized the bull by the tail, and gave him a good kick. The bull looked around at him, very astonished – no, that was no statue – that was alive. He backed up a couple steps, lowered his mighty head. Don Tancredo quickly made use of the opportune moment – jumped down from his pedestal – which a second later the bull's horns threw high into the air. Again he remained standing – ah, that was where his statue ran! And the bull turned back toward him in a racing charge.

Don Tancredo doubled back, quick as a rabbit, and then sprinted to the wall, grabbed onto a plank, and swung up. He sat on top as the mighty animal with the sharp horns crashed into the wooden wall beneath him.

"Caramba!" laughed Pancho Villa. "He almost had him."

And the masses cheered.

Two bullfights followed. A couple of Picadors were thrown from their horses, a half dozen horses had their bellies split open and their intestines torn out. Then came the game of the Banderilleros, which, again in honor of the general, only used fireworks, short fireworks which were ignited, so when the hooks entered the flesh, they burned and exploded and made the black bull even wilder. Then finally the Espadas, who were competent and brave enough, strong in style and with cold, certain thrusts.

"They are all dilettantes!" the colonel declared.

"Soldiers?" he asked. "Indians?"

"No, not a one of them!" answered the colonel. "Not one of them is pure Indian – that wouldn't do – there has to be some Spanish blood. But

just wait, our Indians will have their turn – they don't really have any style, but they have sinews and nerves."

He waved his handkerchief, the hoarse trumpet blew.

The Jaripeo began.

The Mexicans rode into the sand. Vasquez stopped on his Andalusian right next to the gate, the other four jumped in. They let a brown mustang into the arena, and the Vaqueros chased it around. Then Vasquez sat upright in the saddle, galloped out, threw his lasso about fifty meters at the wild nag and caught it around the foreleg, so that it fell down immediately.

They tied it up, let it lay in the sand. Then they chased a couple more wild mustangs out into the arena, fresh from the Llanos, the wide plains of the Durango. One for each of the five – they chased them around, and then brought them down to the ground under the sharp tug of the lasso. And the riders climbed down, went up to the mustangs, and carefully loosened the ropes. Then they grabbed the manes, and swung up onto the bare backs, as the animals got up. They sat on top and remained on top, their left hands grabbing onto the manes; their rights rising and heavily striking down with short, silver headed quirts. The mustangs reared high, stood on their back legs, arched their backs like cats, and jumped with all four legs high into the air. They threw themselves to the ground, rolled over, like young dogs – but the riders were sitting solidly on their backs when they got back up again.

They raced around, bit at the riders, smashed against the walls; they charged, spun around, stood on their hind legs; threw themselves forward like swimmers going head first into the water. But the riders remained on top, and unmercifully, every second, swung the heavy quirt down across their forelegs, bodies, necks and nostrils. The silver decorated leather chaps pressed into the round bodies like screws, the large wheeled spurs beat horribly against the soft flanks. White foam came out of the mouths of the mustangs; drops of blood out of their sides; their brown hides, wet with sweat glistened in the sun. Then the beasts became quiet, calm and tame – recognized their masters. They walked like little lambs, trotted and galloped, as they were commanded – docile and obedient –after only ten minutes.

"I can do that too!" cried Don Benjamino.

The Mexicans drove the dead-tired mustangs away, mounted their race horses once more, and chased new mustangs around the arena. Then the others remained back – alone came the Arabian stud of Vasquez. How he

rode it! His spurs never touched its flanks; he pressed the tips of his boots in and his spurs turned outward. The reins hung loose on the saddle horn; he just clicked with his tongue, and cried some strange word.

And the white stud stretched out, flew at the mustang, right alongside it, very close. Then Vasquez leaned over, grabbed the brown mane, swung up, and was suddenly sitting on the back of the wild horse. He rode it without a bridle, without a saddle, without a whip, only with his iron ankles. He let it gallop around, guided by the Andalusian; around the arena, tight against the red painted boards. Exchanged places, crawled back into his saddle and then again back over to the wet sweaty back of the mustang.

Here – there – and always at a racing gallop; and around, circling in a wild chase, like the little lead horses in the gaming salons. Then he whistled – the white stud broke off to the side. Then he rode the mustang into the middle of the arena – and it obeyed, did everything that he commanded, trembling with fear, worn down, dead-tired, and very docile under the pressure of those iron legs.

Vasquez jumped down; the crowd cheered. He took off his hat, and walked awkwardly through the sand with heavy, metal covered chaps, bent over, and stepping in an x-shaped walk on his powerfully bowed legs. The tips of his toes bent in sharply, one after the other, the heels going to the outside, so the fancy trousers didn't get tangled in the un-bloodied spurs of the rider.

"On foot he is no treat!" laughed the colonel. "He belongs on a nag."

But the Andalusian trotted over to the mustang, which was standing there shaking, breathing heavily, with heaving flanks. Whinnied, as if he wanted to speak to it, and then led it away through the gate, entirely alone. Trotted back to his master, whickered, and sniffed at his pockets, until he found his reward: thick pieces of delicious sugar candy.

And then came Vasquez's great feat, which no one in all Mexico could duplicate.

A huge, powerful bull with yellow spots on his dirty white hide was let into the arena and instantly turned in a vicious charge against the riders – who nimbly evaded him. The horses themselves seemed to be taking part in this game, unafraid of the deadly horns, trusting to their superior speed. They quietly stood and waited, pawing the sand, letting the bull come close; and then, at the last moment, quickly leaping aside. Several times even the

riders were in the path of the attacking bull. But not once did the horns touch the body of a horse.

Then at a wave from Vasquez the riders collected in the center of the ring, turning the bull and surrounding him on all sides. He attacked them left and right, roaring, tossing his head into the air, charging about the sand in impotent rage against these enemies whom he could not catch. Then the riders began to shout at him and their yells were taken up by the thousands of spectators. As the bull raised his head, surprised at this noise, looking around the arena, one of the Mexicans rode up to him and dealt him a blow with his long whip. The bull leaped forward and buried his sharp horns in the sand. On all sides the whips whirred through the air, hissing and cracking and crashing.

And then – suddenly – the courage of the powerful beast broke – he fled, ran through the sand. And after him surged a storm of whips, whizzing, swishing, cracking, whirring through the air. Soon it was the same chase along the fence as they had done before with the horses – hoy! Hoy! And corre! Corre!

Again four riders fell back and again the Arabian mare galloped alone up to the bull. She was a few hundred yards behind him, galloping at full pace, her head stretched forward – one straight line from the nostrils to the tip of her magnificent tail. Her legs were stretched out so that her sides seemed to be touching the sand that she kicked up with her hoofs. Vasquez sat in the saddle with his legs dangling, but with his head and torso bent forward.

The mare came nearer and nearer. Then her nostrils were close to his tail, and then her neck was against the bull's flanks – then her body tight against his. With a sudden jerk, Vasquez lifted himself in the saddle; turned, bent back – both his hands reached out and held fast.

The mare shot ahead – as her master held tight to the tail of the animal – which he had seized, which he held – for just a moment, but long enough to wheel the powerful beast around, to throw it down and out into the arena.

The bull fell, flipped over and rolled; this enormous animal that weighed over three hundred and fifty kilos. Brought down by its tail, by two human hands!

That was Vasquez Cabrera's masterpiece.

But that was not yet the end. The bull stood up again; the riders chased him again, lassoed him, threw him to the ground and tied all four feet together. Then one rider climbed down, tied a thin cord around the body of the animal, around the neck, right behind the forelegs. Then Vasquez climbed down from his mare, hobbled through the sand, awkward and clumsy. He bent forward, put his right leg over the bull's body, and grabbed the rope with both hands. Then he waited, while the others loosened their lassoes.

The bull was freed and stood back up in a second. But a rider sat on his back.

That was unbearable – who in the world rode on a bull? The animal hesitated, stood still for long minutes, appeared to be considering it. Then a strong tremor ran through his hide that would by itself have thrown a man off. But Vasquez didn't move.

Then it began. The proud bull did like the mustangs did, jumped up high on all four legs. He jumped, fell to the ground, rolled around – but when he stood back up, the rider once more was sitting on top. He reared up on his hind legs, stood there, whirled – but this rider didn't slide off, his fingers held fast to the taut rope. Then, quickly, the bull leaped forward, kicked his hind legs into the air, drilled his horns into the sand – ah, it looked as if he was standing on his head. But Vasquez remained on top, his arm swinging, his feet stretched out to the animal's ears, lying along the powerful back.

That was his last attempt. The bull remained standing quietly, pawing, bellowing, moaning, melancholy, then began walking, obeying the pressure from the heels of his master. Through the wide sand, back and forth, like a charming pony.

So rode Vasquez Cabrera.

"Is he a Yaqui?" Frank Braun asked, through the tumultuous applause and cheers.

The adjutant answered, "No, the Yaquis can't do that, they are a mountain people. Vasquez is a Mayan from Yucatan. He is not one of us; he just came up from the south for the day. Three weeks ago he worked with his men in Jalapa, for Carranza. He does not perform often – only a few times a year – and at very high prices. But he performs everywhere – in

front of friends and enemies – whoever is willing to pay his prices: he is the only man whom nobody in all Mexico would harm.”

Again he waved his handkerchief and the band played the Spanish Royal March for a second time. And to the strains of this march, the Goyita strode into the ring.

Frank Braun had often seen similar performances, on farms and ranches in Texas and Coahuila. He had seen it done in more refined ways, more elaborately, but less colorfully, and cheapened, on all kinds of vaudeville stages; the rope-throwing of the cowboys and vaqueros. But it looked so much gayer here in this colorful rodeo, even though her fringed leather skirt smacked of vaudeville, and the ugly brown veil made her head appear like a large wooden egg. She went through the whole series, throwing circles, ovals and spirals, tracing quick figures in the air and in the sand. Then she swung her arms over her head and threw the whirring rope about her like a wide cloak.

She made one of the Mexicans ride through the arena and threw her lasso at fifty meters, tearing him from the saddle. She let another man stand at a considerable distance from her and tied him securely and expertly by throwing her rope around his legs, the right wrist, then the left, over the arms, chest and finally the throat – she tied him up from a distance with nothing but a single rope.

Finally she took the bola – which was new in this part of the country. It was the weapon of the Argentine gauchos – three short ropes, tied together on one end, with heavy lead balls attached to the free ends. She ordered a couple of mustangs and bulls driven into the arena and threw her bola – three times as far as the vaqueros could throw their lassos. The bola whizzed through the air like a wild rocket, caught the galloping animals by the neck and legs and threw them to the ground. The vaqueros rode over, loosened the bola and felt the bones of the frightened animals to see whether the lead weights had broken anything. No, no, the animals were unharmed – that was the trick. But the vaqueros gravely shook their heads; the lasso seemed much safer. The bola could be thrown further, that was true – but what did they have their good horses for?

She performed another number for them. A gray wolf jumped over the fence, and ran right up to her in long leaps – then she had it jump through hoops. It was a very large and beautiful animal, slim and fleet, with a sleek,

with well-groomed fur. Frank Braun wondered where she could have got him, since American wolves were not nearly as big. – then an unsaddled horse was brought in. She carefully powdered the soles of her boots, jumped upon the bare back and put the horse into an easy gallop. She rode around, followed by her wolf. She skillfully stood up, stood on the back of the horse, and then jumped through open and paper covered hoops held up before her, while the wolf ran in a serpentine motion between the horse's hoofs. She also jumped rope on back of the horse.

All this was the common performance of an equestrienne – but then she herself took up one of the hoops, held it high in the air and whistled to her wolf. He took a short start and jumped in one magnificent high leap over the horse, over the dancer and through the middle of the hoop. A beautiful leap.

Then another and another – finally the wolf jumped up to her and stood with her on the horse's back. Enthusiastic applause followed her as she rode out of the arena just like it had for all the others.

"Doesn't she dance?" Frank Braun asked.

"Here, in the sand?" Perlstein retorted. "No, she will dance tonight in the General's quarters! But now comes the main attraction – Villa's gift to his army."

The performers had left and the sand was empty. Only the chulos sprinkled water on the sand, smoothed and leveled it out. Then a bugle call – and a quad Riga of mules was driven into the arena. They pulled in a heavy cage mounted on a platform with small wooden wheels; it was covered on all sides with heavy canvas. The chulos placed it exactly in the center of the arena and one of the red shirted fellows reached under the canvas –you could see that he was drawing back a bolt. Then the men jumped aside quickly and ran with their mules head over heels to the sunny side of the arena.

There was a breathless pause of expectation in the great amphitheater – what was in the cage? It must be something dangerous – and Frank Braun noticed that all around the arena soldiers were posted ten yards apart, aiming their rifles over the red boards at the covered cage.

Nothing, nothing, for long minutes nothing.

Then slowly, painfully slowly, the canvas moved. That was not the wind – no, something pushed and stirred beneath it. A yellow paw appeared,

and behind it a round whiskered head – oh, a tiger, a tiger!

The animal crept slowly out from under the canvas, lifting it carefully and deliberately, walking forward step by step –

What an animal! Who of all the thousands in the rodeo had ever seen anything like it?

They did not shout – not even the women screamed. They opened their eyes and mouths wide, and stared – fascinated, almost dazzled by the wild beast.

Again a bugle call – and a black bull rushed into the arena. Straight to the center of the ring, heading for the heavy cage – which he knocked over with a single thrust of his powerful horns. The tiger leaped aside – just one leap – then crouched down, ready to attack.

Then the bull caught sight of his opponent and again lowered his horns menacingly –it looked as if he were going to rush at the tiger instantly. But he hesitated, lifted his head slowly and pawed the ground with his forelegs, throwing up the sand behind him.

The two beasts stared at each other.

Both were creatures of attack; the strength of one lay in the leap, that of the other in the thrust. But the bull was the one the crowd knew; he was their symbol of strength and wild courage – he had to begin the attack.

Both seemed to be measuring each other's strength – the big cat quietly, crouching and waiting – the bull impatient, almost nervous. Whenever the bull stamped the ground, raising and lowering his head, the tiger answered with a warning, ominous snarl – deep and rumbling.

They stood eye to eye – uncertain –

"Cowardly bull!" the Dictator hissed. But the crowd still waited; there was not a sound in the amphitheater – there was only the oppressive, almost suffocating silence.

Then gradually the black bull turned his head and slowly walked away, step by step – never taking his eyes off the beast in the sand. He raised his horns and trotted over to the fence.

One shout, one tremendous shout of ten thousand voices rose up: "Cowardly bull!"

The General's aide waved his handkerchief. The gates of the arena were opened –two white cows with tinkling bells were let in. Scarcely noticing the tiger, walking along the side, calmly and determinedly they

made straight for the bull. One on each side, they led him gently and quietly back to the stall.

The Indians shook with laughter. Their anger at the cowardly bull was gone in an instant – they saw only this amusing picture.

“Las mujeres!” they screamed. “He loves women, and petticoats!”

Pithy jokes flew over to the rows where the prostitutes were sitting, silly, pointed, crude and brutal, all greeted with screams of delight from the women. They bowed, rolling with laughter, proud and flattered in their role, which they now played: Fat cows leading the strong bull to the stall. Over there –

Afternoon shadows had begun to fall over the arena. The sun sank lower and lower. And in the twilight, in the middle of the sand, lay the powerful tiger. No one was paying any attention to the tiger who slowly got to his feet, turned around in a circle and quietly lay down again.

Once more Colonel Perlstein took out his handkerchief.

“I thought so!” he cried gaily. “The cowboys picked out a splendid bull – he was the most peaceful one in the whole herd; besides, he was blind in the left eye, lazy and a coward. He played his role beautifully – better than I could have possibly expected!”

He waved his cloth high in the air – a bugle signal answered.

“But now watch!” he continued; “Now we will have a different kind of bull!”

He leaned forward, pushed his head up close, and whispered, “We received some champagne last night, 100 cases of it. And I christened him with the first glass of the first bottle.”

“You christened him?” asked Frank Braun in astonishment.

“Yes,” nodded the Jew. “Yes, I did! They christen steamers, airplanes, and zeppelins, don’t they, and with champagne – why not a bull? And what a christening it was! I had a lot of fun – and it was a little complement to you!”

“What’s his name, then?” he asked.

“Just wait,” cried Don Benjamino. “First, we must see him – then we can talk about it!”

He turned impatiently to the back, and commanded the soldiers: “Give the signal – the signal!”

Then, in the same moment, as the trumpet blew, the gate flew open. And out stepped an immense bull. He came out with a calm, solid step – stood there, lifted his head, breathed deeply, and let his eyes get accustomed to the bright light.

“How do you like him?” asked Pearlstein. “And now tell me, what’s his name?”

Frank Braun looked at him closely. It was a majestic animal with wonderful horns that were sharp and bowed to the front, into the air and not to the sides. Then he threw his head up, easily and quickly; his neck was strong, his legs were sturdy, his breast was wide. He was spotted black and white, and in between showed little, rust red spots.

“Well, what’s his name?” urged the colonel. “Don’t you know it? – The colors! The colors! I christened him Aleman”.

On the side where the women sat a piece of colored cloth fell over the balustrade and down into the arena. A soldier jumped across the plank to pick it up, but the bull roared as soon as he saw him, as if to say: “This place belongs to me!” He rushed toward the intruder who quickly climbed back with the cloth. But this bull did not crash against the planks in a clumsy attack; he lifted his horns in the midst of his charge, and with a powerful jump soared over the man high boards of the six-foot fence. Then he ran around in the narrow corridor, chasing everyone in front of him – soldiers, bullfighters, and cowboys, who ran for their lives. The chase went around the arena in the narrow corridor of planks, until, under the dictator’s box, one of the bullfighters closed the door, which shut off the corridor and at the same time opened a new gate into the arena. The bull rushed out into the arena and again stood in the sand, which he claimed as his domain.

Then, in the middle of the giant arena – he noticed the tiger. He did not rush at his opponent, like a wild storm wind. He walked forward calmly, step-by-step, his head half lowered to the ground, his eyes on the tiger, sharp horns pointing straight forward. Ten feet from the big cat he stopped.

Again, the tiger crouched, ready for the charge – again, the two beasts eyed each other suspiciously. Then the bull took aim, backed up a few steps for a start, and charged at the tiger. But the cat seemed to have foreseen this and jumped aside, immediately crouching down again – and then leaped forward. In the next instant the cat sat on the bull’s back, it’s powerful claws thrusting deeply into the bull’s body. But this only lasted for an instant – the next second, the two beasts were apart again. There was too

much power on both sides – and the cat had apparently miscalculated the distance. Even his strong claws could not maintain their grip on the bull's back, even though they gouged deeply into the flesh, making the red blood gush forth in a torrent and then – then the blood christened him – better than the champagne – then he really glowed in the evening sun and with the three colors of Germany.

Frank Braun threw a quick look at Colonel Pearlstein. The colors of the Lewis! He thought.

The bull, having shaken off his enemy, whirled around to face him, and shaking his enormous head back and forth, roared with pain. Then, in a quick decision once more rushed at the cat, which had not expected this new attack to be carried out with such lightning speed. The cat bounded aside, barely escaping the full force of the powerful horns, but was not fast enough. The bull's horns caught him a glancing blow above the left hind leg. Not with the points, but with the side. And so much power was behind the thrust that it knocked the beast down and rolled him over in the sand. The bull stopped with a jerk, turned in a quarter of a second, and attacked again. But then the tiger also seized the moment, and sprang – hung on to the head of the bull – dug its mighty claws deep into the bull's neck. The bull shook him off with two or three quick movements, instantly regaining his balance, and attacked again in a fraction of a second. Then his horns caught the huge cat before it actually touched the ground and threw him skyward like a ball. Then he lowered his powerful head and charged again. His sharp weapons caught the cat's thigh and once more sent him sailing through the air. And then it was as if he played tennis with the giant cat. Wherever it fell, he picked it up with his terrible horns, and threw it high again and again over the sand.

Several times the tiger tried to regain his feet and crawl to safety – in vain. Cornered, he fought on, and often his claws gored. But the pain only seemed to make the proud bull stronger and wilder – his attacks grew ever more vicious as he thrust his daggers deeper and deeper, lifting the cat and pushing it toward the fence. And there he made his final attack – with both his horns. He nailed the dying Tiger to the boards.

Then he tore himself loose and trotted slowly to the center of the arena. In the last rays of the sinking sun, he rested from his victory, panting, bellowing triumphantly, wrapped in the red cloak of his own blood.

The crowd applauded; they screamed and yelled, half crazy in wild enthusiasm, in honor of the bull. They threw their hats into the arena, their coats, wraps, and shawls. They stood on the benches, stamping their feet, waving their arms and shouting:

"Bravo El Toro! Bravo El Toro!"

One man with the piercing voice of a castrate shrieked:

"Viva bravo Toro!"

The crowd took it up, 10,000 people shrieking in unison:

"Viva El Toro! Viva El Toro!"

Pancho Villa had also jumped to his feet and shouted with the rest. All at once he yelled into the arena:

"Viva la Goyita!"

Frank Braun asked, "Why does he honor the dancer?"

The colonel whispered, "Because it is she who –"

He interrupted himself as the general beckoned him to his side. Pancho Villa reached into a big leather pouch that hung at the left side of his belt, next to his saber hilt, opened it and took out a fistful of gold coins, all shiny new American $20 gold pieces.

"Take this colonel!" The dictator said, "Count out one hundred and send them to la Goyita!"

The colonel did so, tied the money in his handkerchief and sent three soldiers with it to the Spanish dancer.

For the last time that afternoon the gates on the east side opened. Cows came into the arena, red, white, and dun colored. Tinkling bells were tied to their necks and they were all decorated with ribbons and garlands of flowers; behind them, the chulos drove their quadriga of mules into the arena. The bull cast a quick glance at the four mules in their brightly colored harness and the red blouses of the drivers, and turned contemptuously away – no, that was not for him! The chulos tied the tiger's tail to their ropes and whipped up their mules, shouting and waving. The mules dragged the dead beast around the arena at a fast gallop.

In the meantime, the cows surrounded the blood bedecked victor, pushing and crowding close to him. One, a beautiful, snow white animal, put her pink snout against his neck and gently, almost tenderly, licked the red blood. He lifted his head over hers and licked her, just once, shyly and quickly, between her eyes and her forehead. And for a third time, the

musicians struck up the royal march of the Prussian King – but this time in honor of the proud, victorious bull.

This time the crowd did not make any jokes about women and cows and petticoats. They watched reverently, in silence and admiration.

That was the last number in the great games given in honor of General Villa at Torreon. But after the bull and his cows had disappeared behind the gates, one more shout arose from the stands, a wild, ringing shout in which the whole crowd joined in.

“Viva Villa!”

About 10 o’clock that night, Colonel Pearlstein knocked at Frank Braun’s door with the silver handle of his riding crop.

“Come along, Doctor,” he urged. “It’s time now!”

The horses were already saddled and waiting in front of the fonda. They climbed into the saddles.

“The party is in full swing at Villa’s garden!”

The Jew laughed as they were riding over to the general’s quarters.

“They have eaten all the food and drunk all the pulque they want. Now the champagne corks are popping and Villa drinks with his generals in the patio; they’re waiting for la Goyita!”

They rode through the streets of the suburbs. Everything was brightly lit and from every house came the shouts of soldiers and the shrill voices of women.

“The men were paid today – their wages for three months. The money just got off the printing press; it arrived with the champagne yesterday.”

“American money?”

“No, not this time,” the colonel said. “Our own! Here, take some!”

He pulled out a roll of bills from his pocket and handed it to Frank Braun – there were 500 bills of 100 pesos each. The bank notes were made of the cheapest paper, poorly printed with the childish signature: Francisco Villa. Frank Braun handed back the roll, but the colonel refused it.

“No, no, keep it!” he said. “From tomorrow on it will be legal currency – you can’t use anything else. Otherwise, of course, it has no value whatsoever – it’s just paper of which we can print as much as we like: Villa money!”

“Do the people take it?”

“They’ve got to take it. What other choice do they have?” replied the adjutant. “Didn’t the people take Assignat’s? That is where Villa got the

idea – from his book about the French Revolution. We copy it in all details. Madero started that – then Carranza followed his example, and all the others – but most of all Villa. Zapata's the only one who doesn't do it – he plugs along in his own fashion. He probably doesn't know there ever was such a thing as the French Revolution."

In the gardens. The soldiers lay on the ground. They drank and gambled, smoked and sang, told crude stories, and crept behind the bushes with their harlots, emitting obscene bellows, shameless and brutal. Now and then one would hear the whining sound of a badly tuned arpa and would see them dance the national *jarabe tapatio* with clumsy steps. Or the women would dance the *mitote* alone, the warrior dance. In one place they were gambling for a wench who stood by and laughed. They dealt out the dirty cards: *siete y media*. At another place they rolled dice on an old drum for a woman. In front of some house they were taking chances in a lottery – for another woman-the prize. Oh, yes, it was truly a celebration – Villa's great celebration.

They climbed down from the horses and stepped into the house. They walked through the house into the patio, into the open, square courtyard which the Mexicans had decorated with naïve taste as a ballroom. Mattresses wrapped in colored cloth were spread upon the floor between the colonnades, with a few wicker chairs and old rocking chairs arranged between them. Garlands of leaves with red, yellow, and blue paper flowers were strung between the pillars. Carbide lamps were hung high up on the walls, casting a bright, glaring light on the scene, and beneath the gallery dangled a couple of dim Chinese lanterns.

Here Villa was drinking with his generals and colonels – and with painted, half naked women. It was exactly the same picture as outside in the garden – here too, the men stood and sat and squatted on the floor, smoking, drinking, singing, making lewd remarks, and pinching the women on their buttocks or reaching for their breasts. To be sure, their uniforms were not quite as ragged and they all wore new leather chaps of American make. Nor were they quite drunk enough to simply throw themselves on the floor with the harlots; only occasionally would a man slap a woman on her rear and she would follow him laughingly into the house. Perhaps the girls were slightly younger, and better merchandise than the flesh that was offered to the soldiers. But the main thing was that here, they drank champagne –

Goulet, Roderer, and Montebello – chilled on ice as it should be. That was how you could tell they were gentlemen.

"Don't you have anything you could give the general for a birthday present?" The colonel asked in a low voice. "It would flatter him."

Frank Braun felt in his pockets; but they were empty. There was the little knife in his shirt pocket – but what good would that be to Villa, for whom every knife had to have at least the length of a good machete! Dammit, why hadn't he thought of something!

Then he remembered the revolvers that his secretary had packed for him.

"I will ride back for them," he said.

"Don't bother," the colonel said. "I will send one of my Yaquis. You can trust him. Give him your room key – and tell him what to bring."

Frank Braun tried to give detailed instructions – then he decided it would be better to have the entire suitcase brought over. He described where the suitcase was – on a broken chair, at the side of the bed.

The colonel nodded, beckoned to one of the soldiers and gave him the key.

"Come along with me," he said then. "In the meantime, we will have a glass of champagne in my room."

They turned to go. Frank Braun quickly looked back to see whether the general had noticed them. Villa sat on his chair with a glass in his hand while a peddler squatted on the floor in front of him, displaying jewelry from a large wooden box – necklaces, earrings, bracelets – and wide gold rings with flashy stones – for the general's fat fingers.

There was a knock on the door and the Yaqui soldier came back with a large leather suitcase. Frank Braun searched for the key, then opened it. The pistols were at the bottom. On top of them, Frank Braun found a heavy black leather case heavily decorated with silver. What was in that? He picked it up and looked at it. Then he remembered, silver toilet articles – everything of hammered silver. It was a present that a gentleman in Cleveland had given to him after a lecture. At the time he had scarcely given it a glance. It was a little shaving kit.

His secretary had packed the damned thing? How lucky – he could not have possibly found a better present for the general. Leaving the revolvers in the bag, he took out the case and stuffed his pockets with other silly, five and ten cent store articles. He went back across the court with the colonel,

the box in his arms. When he got back to the patio, the peddler had already closed his deal with the general and was squatting in a corner, putting away his wares. The dictator was playing with the gold trinkets, looking fondly at his fat fingers on which he now wore three heavy rings, set with imitation diamonds.

Frank Braun walked over to him, shook hands, wished him a happy name day, and then gave him his present. Villa did not thank him – he was much too curious to find out what was in the case. He opened it cautiously and took out all the shiny things, one by one. There were three razors of Solinger steel and ivory handles, soap, cups and brushes. Everything could be taken apart and put back together again – that pleased the general very much. There were two mirrors – a hand mirror and a small desk mirror. He looked into that one for a long time. But the main attractions were the small manicure instruments – small files and knives, scissors, small sticks, powder boxes, little spoons – an endless store of wonders. The officers pressed around, just as astonished at the strange things as he was.

"Women!" cried the general. The girls pressed close. "Which of you know what these are?"

They devoured the shiny things with their eyes, trembling with greed and the desire to be allowed to touch them. But one of them pressed forward, proud and puffed up, "I know all of them!"

"You, Concha?" asked the General. "Where did you learn about these things?"

The prostitute said, "I was up in Washington. I went there with Colonel Benitez, the one General Madero sent."

He allowed her to kneel down beside him.

Oh yes, she knew them all, had studied them well in Yankee land. She took out every little piece, explaining it exactly to him. He carefully laid everything back in its place, not trying to use anything. There was only one thing he could not resist – it was when she explained the ear spoon to him. He took it carefully between his thumb and pointer finger, and used it to easily clean first the left and then the right ear. Then he laughed, very satisfied with the result, cleaned it thoroughly on Concha's hair and laid it back in the chest.

"Do you know how to use everything?" he asked the prostitute, who eagerly nodded. "Good, then you should come back tomorrow morning, to make my hands beautiful."

He laughed out loud and stuck his dirty hands in her face, showing her the deep black nails.

The prostitute stood up radiant, smiling. What a stroke of luck – the general's manicure!

The adjutant bent down to him.

"The Goyita is here, general."

"Let her come in," Pancho Villa cried. Then he turned to Frank Braun and offered him a cigarette. "Thank you Caballero, thank you! – Bring us wine, I want to drink with him!"

He offered a full glass to Frank Braun.

"Drink, German, drink! If you want women, pick one out for yourself. If you want a horse, say so and Don Benjamino will give you the best horse we have!"

He waved for a soldier to bring him a basket and some brown paper. He showed his present one more time to his officers, explaining everything himself, magnanimous and proud, deeply knowledgeable. He wrapped up the chest, and laid it in the basket. Then he gave it to the soldier. But he hesitated on whether to send it to his room; finally he ordered the Indian to squat down beside him with the case between his legs. Perhaps he would like to look at it again later.

The space was cleared in the center of the patio and the marble floor was swept clean. The men crowded into the space between the pillars, some of the officers sat on the few available chairs while the rest lay or squatted on the floor. The women had to stand against the walls in the rear.

A hurdy-gurdy man pushed his instrument onto the patio with squeaking wheels, placed himself in a corner between two pillars and immediately started to play. The Goyita followed right behind him.

She stepped into the center of the patio without bowing to her audience, without greeting anyone. She wore a Spanish costume; her hair was coiled high and pinned with a large comb, from which her mantilla hung down, a shawl of black lace, that fell down over her shoulders. She wore several red hibiscus blossoms in her dark black hair over her left ear, and one of the same in the middle of her breast.

She had large, beautiful eyes that glowed a deep blue.

"Well, how do you like her?" Pearlstein asked.

Frank Braun looked at her. He knew her – why, certainly. Where had he seen her before?

Then it occurred to him – that was – yes, that was the dancer from the *Thuringi*a, who had nursed little Louison! Then he also knew where Francisco Villa had gotten the Tiger – it had come from the fever ship!

He nodded lightly across at her, and caught her glance. She recognized him right away, but didn't respond. She treated him like all the others. She waited for the rhythm of the hand organ, and then began to dance.

She danced a *madrilena*, playing with her little fan. Dignified, proper, a little stiff and boring. It seemed silly – a *madrilena* here!

But this audience liked it right away; they showered the Goyita with applause.

Then she took the castanets, and danced a rich *petenera*; again quite tame, graceful and delicate, like the well mannered Fräuleins in Toledo and Saragossa.

She laid down the mantilla, pulled out the comb and laid them both on a chair next to her companion, the organ grinder. All her things were lying there, clothes, and shoes. He even saw a riding crop.

La Pegona, he thought.

She put on a hat, a gray felt hat with the stiff brim, a pert Córdoba, like those the men wear in Andalusia. And she selected a large manton, a long, fringed silk shawl of green and yellow with giant, red flowers. Then she returned to the center of the floor.

Then she danced the tango. But not wild and frenzied like the cheeky women in front of their clay huts, in the suburbs of Buenos Aries. It was not a gypsy tango either, like those, the Andalusian prostitutes danced in their cuadros, swinging their behind's and lifting their skirts. No, it was very measured, proud, and reserved. Almost moral – *ad usum Delphini*!

She threw the hat away, and took up a white manton. Then she danced the *seguidialla*, then the *soleras*. Finally, with a very beautiful old cloth of deepest violet she danced a *malaguena*. And always with the clicking castanets.

Family dances, he thought. Exactly like the high society girls danced in Granada, in Jaen and Seville. Those, those who were educated in cloisters, who could converse in French and play the piano badly, who were never allowed out on the streets alone and in the evenings and received their lovers at the ugly, narrow barred windows that separated them from love through long years, until the priest spoke the necessary blessings in the church. She danced gracefully, very competently and dignified.

She stepped back, sat down on her chair. Immediately she was surrounded by officers, who held out their glasses to her. But she shook her head, and didn't drink a drop.

"The rumba!" cried Pancho Villa. "Dance the rumba!" And the others took it up, all shouting, that she should dance the rumba.

"No," spoke the Goyita. And not another word.

She pulled off the high-heeled shoes, and put on *spargatten*, peasant shoes of canvas made with hemp soles. Nothing else. No hat and no mantilla, no comb, nor shawl, nor castanets.

That was how she danced the quick Aragonese *jota*. Oh yes, there was blood in that – now she showed some of her slender legs in quick movements.

The officers could not get enough, and wanted more, always more. And ever again, they demanded her to dance the rumba. But this Frau remained firm. She put her high-heeled shoes back on, and danced the *faruca*, sensuous like a gypsy, swinging her hips –, no, that was not for high society. She danced the *garrotin* with her feet drumming and stamping, mimicking the movements of the toreros. And then, raising her skirts, and letting them fall, the provocative *buleria*.

"The rumba!" shouted the officers, excited, and aroused. "The rumba!"

"No!" She said again.

In a skirt with a long train. She danced the *flamenco* of the Gaditanian prostitutes, the *lapateao*, and *por alegrias*, twirling and cheeky. She also danced the common *mariana*, rolling her hips, throwing her buttocks, twisting and rolling her stomach, while the motions of her hands invited in shameless gestures.

Villa called out to her: "Dance the rumba for me!"

He couldn't stand that all the officers were standing around her, while he was sitting there alone. He fought with himself, he really wanted to jump up, and join them. But he wanted to show, that he was different – not to his generals, – only to the dancer.

"Dance the rumba for me," he cried, "only for me!"

Abruptly the Goyita stood up, going forward a few steps, the officers made room for her, crowding to the sides. She took another pull on her cigarette, then threw it away. With both hands. She put on the manton, and lifted her head high.

“No!” She cried at him. “Not for you, and not for anyone! – You are all drunk tonight – all of you!”

She walked diagonally across the patio, like a princess, and no one dared to stop her.

Pancho Villa fumed with rage – and yet he laughed – enjoyed himself – happy that at least he had held back, and not thrown himself at her like the others.

“You are like a bunch of horny tomcats,” he bellowed. “You are like a bunch of dogs,” he shouted, “running after a bitch in heat!”

They all laughed heartily, and only one old man replied – the crippled, ugly Alvaro Gomucio, who was lame in his left leg.

He cried: “You’re only half right, Pancho Villa! – La Goyita is not in heat!”

Again, they roared with laughter, filled their glasses and rinsed their hoarse throats with champagne.

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An officer came into the courtyard, stood in front of Villa and saluted.

“Gonzalez is outside,” he announced. “He brought the prisoners from Bonanza.”

“Bring them in!” commanded the general.

Don Benjamino muttered: “Oh No! This will go bad for them.”

A couple of officers and soldiers came in, covered from head to toe with yellow brown dust and dirt; looking at them you could see that they had come from a hard ride. They pushed their prisoners in front of them, who could scarcely stand on their trembling legs; pushed them forward with stone clubs and saber sheaths.

There were nine, six men and three women.

“Priests and nuns!” the Colonel whispered to Frank Braun. “Look – the garb of the women was once nun’s clothing, before they became so tattered and torn and ruined by dirt and blood. And the fellows – do you recognize their tonsures? Now pay attention: now we’re going to play the French revolution.”

“What do you mean?” asked the German.

“In our book –” the adjutant continued, “in the book about the great revolution, that the general has had read to him at least a dozen times, it says that the Jacobites hated the priests. That they stormed the cloisters and raped the nuns. And that they hung all the men of the priesthood on the streetlights. We don’t have any streetlights – but we can hang them, just as well as the French.”

He explained to him that a couple days ago, the general had given orders to pillage the convent of the Sisters of Good Hearts at Bonanza; there had been a rumor that a few priests had escaped and were being hidden by the nuns at the convent.

“I see the priests,” Frank Braun said, “but where are the nuns?”

Again Colonel Pearlstein laughed: “Oh, it was just a small convent – there couldn’t have been more than a dozen sisters there. How many are here? Three? Well, then the other nine are soldier prostitutes today! That happens quickly with us. You see, every troop receives the command to seize and bring to headquarters everyone who doesn’t put up armed resistance or try to escape. Only, if they try to flee – they are shot. But it is strange: it is always the sisters that are still tolerably pleasing, that always attempt to flee, always attempt armed resistance. We only get the old fossils at headquarters – to interrogate.”

“And the general is not jealous?” asked Frank Braun. “Not angry that his rascals only bring the old flesh and devour the tender themselves?”

“No,” said the colonel, “decidedly not. Because he knows, that the young nuns would have already gone through twenty hands before they were delivered to him – that is no different than with our women. And then, you see, there is one other thing about the nuns. Earlier, the general himself pillaged many convents – and well knows the difference. He has long-lost the taste for that sort of thing – they are not good in bed. I believe he would give all the sisters in the world for a single kiss from la Goyita.”

Captain Gonzalez made his report. There were the priests; the seventh, an eighty-year-old man, had collapsed, half dead on the way: they had left him lying there. Of the nuns, four had put up armed resistance, and five had attempted to flee: they had been shot down.

“Hopefully, you scored a bull’s-eye!” roared Villa. And he laughed aloud, like all the others, over his glorious joke.

He bellowed at the priests. “You have spied, you dogs, for general Carranza!”

One attempted to speak, a couple of broken words came painfully from his trembling lips.

But Pancho Villa interrupted him: “Shut up!”

He waved with his hand, then grabbed his glass, and allowed it to be filled.

He shouted at the nuns, crying: “Can you dance the rumba?”

The old sisters stared at him – why was he asking that? But he scarcely looked at them, and hissed contemptuous: “Away!”

‘So this is how they do court-martial’s here!’ thought Frank Braun. ‘A single: shoot the dog! That’s all – then they place them against the wall. The Jacobites couldn’t have done it better! Why bother with hearings, with judges and witnesses and lawyers? They have tonsures, are priests – shoot them dead!

He went to the adjutant.

“Keep the people here, just for a minute!” he asked.

“What do you want?” asked the colonel.

He replied: “Just for a minute!”

‘Like the Yankee press,’ he thought, ‘exactly like that! – They write: Germans! They are barbarians, Huns, betrayers, terrorists, robbers and child murderers! Kill them dead! Like the disciples, just like that! Jews, they screech, Jews, those that crucified the Lord, spilled the blood of the Christ child – kill them dead! –’

He was a leper, a German, like the others – like the Jews, like the Catholic priests: so their fates were forged together.

He considered, then looked over at the general. He was uncommonly ugly, with protruding cheekbones and huge ears. Hairy from his neck down and with long hairy arms, with wild flickering eyes, that were even suspicious of themselves. The short nose was smashed in, the giant mouth below it was full of large snow white teeth, that glowed brightly from out of lips, which were much too short. And he ground them, ground them together, like a tiger –

But then the general struck the soldier that was squatting next to him lightly over the head. He took the leather case, opened it, and began to play with the mirrors and little spoons –

He thought: no – he is not a tiger ! He is a gorilla, that is playing at being a tiger.

He stepped up close to him.

“General,” he said. “You have promised me a horse. I have a good one – and don’t need a second one right now. Would you grant me a different wish?”

“What do you want?” asked the dictator.

“Release the priests for me,” he asked.

The general wrinkled his brow; then he continued: “Not for nothing, General! I will give you a revolver for each one!” He turned around and asked the adjutant to bring his suitcase over to him.

Pancho Villa laughed. “A revolver for each priest?”

He considered.

“And I will give you five boxes of bullets with each weapon – 250 bullets!”

“You are making a very bad bargain,” cried the general. “All of them together are not worth a bullet.”

They brought him the suitcase, and he opened it, took out a box with wooden matches that would not light, and gave them to the general. Then a box of exploding cigars, a couple Jack-in-the-Boxes, pretty little toys. He emptied the suitcase, giving the general all of the cheap playthings.

An entire Christmas assortment for all kinds of children!

Pancho Villa forgot everything else in a moment. He watched as Frank Braun explained the childish pranks to him, meanwhile, sending the officers over to the other side so they couldn’t see. Then he tested the playthings himself, one after the other, calling the general’s back, then waving the women up, giving them the little things – pounding his knees with pleasure, when they fell for it.

Once more Frank Braun repeated, “Do I get the priests, general?”

“Where are the weapons?” Pancho Villa replied.

He took them out, piece by piece, and laid them on the floor alongside the boxes of bullets. The general took a revolver, and examined it carefully, feeling it.

Bring the priests!” he commanded.

They brought the priests back and the nuns with them; the general had them lined up.

“It would give me great pleasure to try out this revolver,” he laughed. He raised the revolver, aimed it for a moment at the head of the first, then suddenly lifted the weapon high and shot into the air.

The old nuns screamed out and fell on their knees, praying out loud. The priests followed their example.

“Shut up, pack,” the general continued. “You are not worth the powder to kill you! Stand up, priests – this man here has paid your ransom! You are free!”

He turned to his adjutant.

“Don Benjamino, see to it, that nothing happens to them! Write out passports for them for their journey to the United States.”

But he had not yet had enough. He called one of the priests over to him and gave him a cigar. The priest took it, turning it in his trembling fingers.

“Smoke!” commanded the dictator. A soldier held out a burning match for the priest to light his cigar, who then took a couple careful pulls.

“Smoke harder!” cried Pancho Villa. “Inhale and exhale!”

The priest obeyed – sucked as hard as he could, with sucked in cheeks.

Five, six pulls – then the firework exploded with a sharp bang. Frightened, he let the cigar fall, his entire body trembling. His shaking legs threatening to collapse.

Pancho Villa doubled over with laughter.

“Go, go, black gown! And if you get back to Spain, tell your brothers: these are the kind of cigars that they smoke with General Villa.”

Colonel Pearlstein had them led away. But they were not yet out the door, when the dictator called them back.

“Not the nuns,” he bellowed, “not them! He bought the priests, one revolver for each of them. He did not buy the old women – they hang! Out with them!”

Frank Braun cried: “I will buy them too, general.”

“Do you have any more revolvers?” yelled Villa. “And enough bullets?”

He searched in his suitcase – it was empty. He had only packed six weapons – and he had given away all the toys. The only things left were a couple of books.

“Here, my suitcase –” he offered.

“No!” cried the general. “Give that to Captain Gonzalez, so that he will get your priests safely back to Yankee land. I want revolvers for the nuns, just like for the priests! And if you don’t have anymore – then they must dangle.”

Then the Goyita pressed forward. He had not noticed her the entire time – but now she was suddenly there.

She pushed a couple of officers to the side, and stood right in front of the dictator, drawing herself up to her full height.

She spoke: “I will pay their ransom.”

Pancho Villa yelled at her: “you? – Even if you give me the weight of these stuffed pigs in gold, you won’t get them.”

The Goyita said: “I will dance the rumba.”

The general jumped up. “The rumba? – The nuns are free! Captain Gonzalez – you see to it, that they get through safely and are unharmed.”

The dancer stepped up to the nuns, kissed them, gave each a couple of gold pieces – then came quickly back to the dictator.

“Give me a glass of wine, general,” she said.

Pancho Villa held out champagne to her – she emptied the glass in three quick droughts.

“Another one!” she asked.

Frank Braun gave her his full glass – she thanked him with a small glance, and drank the wine.

“Clear the floor,” she said. “I will get dressed.”

She took her clothes, shoes, castanets, all of the her things in her arms, and went into one of the rooms that led off from the patio.

Once more the officers cleared out a place in the middle, swept it clean of bottles, dirt and paper. Then they all filled their glasses to the brim, and waited.

One, lean, with a heavy mustache, stood next to Frank Braun and looked at him, as if he wanted something, that he did not dare to ask for.

“What do you want?” asked the German.

The Mexican pointed at the leather suitcase with greedy eyes.

“May I have it?” he asked. “The general –”

“Are you Captain Gonzalez?” Frank Braun interrupted him.

The other nodded. The German reached inside, took out the books, and gave him the suitcase, following him to the door.

“Promise me –” he began.

The captain did not let him finish a word.

“I will give them something to eat and to drink, as much as they want – even tonight! I will bring them safely to the border – don’t worry about it.”

He tenderly caressed the beautiful leather suitcase.

“Come on!” He cried to the priests and the nuns.

Frank Braun stepped up to them, gave them Villa gold and American dollar bills. Then he remembered the books, which he held in his hand.

Perhaps – travel guides –

He opened them – no, that is not what they were! – **Jacopone da Todi** – was one of them. And the other, the thin one, contained the songs of St. Francis and those of his disciples.

“Who can read Latin?” he asked.

One could, the one that had been made to smoke a cigar. He gave him the verses of the Saint of Assisi.

“Is one of you an Italian?”

No, they were all Spanish. But the old mother superior had lived in Rome, and understood both Latin and Italian. He gave her the sweet songs of the man from Todi.

“Don’t forget, mother,” he said, “don’t forget: that these are the pious poems of the one that wrote the **Mater Dolorosa** as well as the **Mater Speciosa**. Dolorosa – was the mother of God – who has been with all of you tonight – very tragic! And yet she was also – the Speciosa! And meditate on this: Dolores is the name of the woman, that has made you free, Dolores Echevarria.”

From inside came the sounds of the organ grinder.

“Go with God!” he cried. “Pray for the Catholic priests in this land. And – for the Jews in Russia – the same thing is happening to them over there, as is happening to you here! – And, and, – for the Germans – everywhere in the world!”

He hurried away – and again took his place next to Villa. But the dancer was not yet back – it was only the hand organ playing the wild rhythm of the rumba.

“Congratulations!” The colonel whispered to him. “That was well done! But I tell you, Doctor – a half year ago Villa would not have set the priests and the nuns free! Not for the shaving kit and not for the revolvers, not for your exploding cigars nor for the other toys from the New York five and ten cent store! – Not even for the rumba of the Goyita!”

He handed him a full glass.

“Don’t drink yet – just wait – until the dancer comes,” he continued. “The French revolution is going out of fashion with us – that is what it is! Sometimes the general doubts, whether it is really necessary to kill

everyone that wears priestly garments! Did you hear any juicy curses from him, any blasphemies? Nothing – not one word! But a half year ago, he spit them out with every sentence: "*Me cago em Dios*!" – "*Jodo en la Virgen*!" – Unflattering filth, such as no one other than him in the entire world can speak! Now it is different, since we have been studying the Prussian King. – I am, God help me, not very well educated, and don't know whether everything is true, that our Spanish book tells of Frederick the Great. That he was a devout atheist – that he believed in nothing – that impressed Villa. But then it said, that despite that, he left all the religions in peace. That he said, that everyone could believe in their own way. In the beginning, the general could not grasp that at all – but it appears that he has gradually come to understand. Because, you see, when we have a book, we all read it at least a dozen times over and over again! The general has to copy somebody – and I believe, that the day is not far away, where everyone can pray in his own way, as he wishes!"

He interrupted himself – the Goyita stepped into the courtyard.

She wore a short, white muslin skirt and a blouse of the same material that was cut like a man's shirt, but open in the front. A blue silk shawl was wound tightly around her hips and she wore a blue silk cloth of the same material around her neck. A third blue cloth was wound around her forehead, covering her hair, and tied at the back in a knot. The ends of it hung down to the nape of her neck. Her costume was that of a peasant girl, from the vaudeville stage, of course. The dancer carried a little basket in her hand; she made a few practiced movements, that were supposed to indicate that she was coming home from work in the field and that it was very hot. Why the heat should make her feel like dancing was not made very clear – without any plausible reason she decided to do it anyway. She threw her little basket away, pulled off the kerchief around her neck, and fanned herself a couple times with it, as if she was wiping the sweat away, and then threw it after the basket. The Goyita went through this little prologue without much enthusiasm, and with rather stiff movements. But you could understand the meaning of it: it was very hot – that was why she was very lightly dressed, with only a skirt and blouse. And: she wanted to dance.

Then she stepped out into the center, threw a glance to her organ grinder, and waited for the beat.

But suddenly, on a wave from the general, all the officers stood up with him.

“Viva la Goyita!” they cried. They emptied their glasses, and held them high in their hands.

Colonel Pearlstein went up to her, and handed her a full glass. And she took it, drank it down to the last drop.

“Viva Villa!” she answered.

She gave the glass back, and threw a quick glance around her. Stamped her feet, and cried out loud: “Send the women out, General!”

He could understand that! – No, she would not dance the rumba in front of them, not in front of prostitutes!

So the women had to go, out into the garden – had to wait outside.

Only then did she begin.

Slowly, step-by-step, stretching and weaving, but subtle and lithe. Gradually her movements became faster, more sweeping and curving. Ripples passed down both arms and down her entire body, from her throat to the tips of her toes, as if snakes were swiftly gliding down her body. And – in sharp contrast to that, was the motion of her shoulders, short, quick, and strangely angular. This was no dance of the hips or the belly. Not one where you kicked up your legs, lifted your arms over your head and made provoking gestures with the head and hands. Even though all of that played a part, even though she pushed out her belly and pulled it back in, rolled her hips – lifted her arms and legs high in gestures of the tiresome heat, that sought coolness. But their gaze was drawn only toward her shoulders, to her shoulders and her breasts.

Then she danced faster, wilder, twirling, her hands placed solidly on her hips. Her shoulders jerked, flew back and forth, sprang out, then back – one – the other – and again, both. Then it opened – only for a brief moment – her unbuttoned blouse – showed a narrow strip of glowing white flesh, down to her waist.

Then, it wasn’t just the shoulders that were working, no, it was her entire chest. – The stretching became a quick jerking, the weaving and swaying became a fast heaving – it seemed, as if she were dancing with her lungs. Always twisting, ever wilder and faster–

And then it jumped – from out of her blouse with a quick twist of her left shoulder – one of her young breasts. There it was – peering out, for a second – quick, as radiant as the white blouse – then disappeared again. Just as quickly as it had come –

“Ah!” Exclaimed the officers. “Ah, oh!”

She danced on. Again and again. This twitching of her shoulders, this trembling of her breasts – and the undulations of her lower body. Again and again. This stretching that became a quick twitching – this wild jerking that dissolved once more into gentle, voluptuous swaying.

Every eye was on her, expectant, greedy and hungry, waiting for that quick moment, when they would spy one of her white breasts.

“The other one!” They cried hoarsely. “The other one!”

That was the game, that it always looked as if one of her breasts wanted to jump out of the protecting blouse – which then covered it back up, again and again.

“The other one!” They screamed.

And almost at the same time, as if on command – the right breast flew out of the blouse. Laughing, glowing – like cool marble – then hiding once more behind the thin cloth.

Pancho Villa jumped up from his chair, and bent forward. His fat eyes protruded from their sockets, the spittle ran out of his open mouth.

“Las dos!” He bellowed. “Both of them!”

And his people yelled after him: “Las dos! Las dos!”

All of the lecherous lust spread like thick fog through the wide room. It crawled into their noses and mouths, Clawed into their poor brains. These crude warriors, at who’s laughing words, thousands of cheeky prostitutes were prepared to obey, these robbers and bandits, that tore half-grown children away from their mothers and dragged nuns from out of their beds, to whom the flesh of women was as cheap and common as their dirty pulque schnapps – they trembled in reverent excitement over these two breasts. Their fat, hot hands groped after these snowy globes, their dark eyes leered after the white quarry that jumped out and just as quickly hit itself again, their tongues, protruded like those of bulls, thirsting after the sweet drink of those white buds. Their nostrils scented the perfume of cherry blossoms, their ugly ears drank in the dancing music of those white kittens that played hide and seek –

One – quick, quick – and then another – quick, quick –

Frank Braun saw how the lame general Alvaro Gumucio embraced a pillar with both arms, clinging to it, as if he feared to faint. He saw, how Pancho Villa pressed his knees on the shoulder of the soldier, that was couching next to him, pressing him down with the entire weight of his bulk, as if he wanted to squash him.

“Las dos!” Whispered the dictator. “Las dos!”

Colonel Pearlstein, who was standing next to him, had a guarded expression on his face. He was still smiling, critical and slightly mocking – but it seemed frozen, turned to solid stone. And his fists were cramped around the handle of his riding crop, bending it, twisting – as if he wanted to break it.

And it even tore him into the red fog. It was, as if he was breathing in hot lava, as if he would choke in the heat of all this passion. And only distantly – distantly – somewhere in the clouds behind the eternal desert beckoned a white coolness –

White, white – there was white somewhere in the infinite distance – shade and snow – innocence and purity – and – behind the marble and the swans and death’s cold grave clothes – was a release from all this burning torment. There somewhere, in the clouds that covered the moon – that wrapped the white glowing light in a radiant mystery – the great salvation –

Then he saw it – flying past like a shooting star in the November night – a little red strip in the middle of her breasts. A small wound, scarcely a half inch long – and a single drop of blood oozed out of it –

Something whipped him into a frenzy – something pulled him forward –

But he conquered it, clung with both hands to the arms of his chair. Held fast.

One – a glimpse – a glimpse – and then another – a glimpse –

Pancho Villa clenched his fists.

“Las dos!” He pleaded. “Las dos!”

Suddenly, with a jerk, she stopped as the music broke off. She drew herself up to her full height – her proud head flung far back – her deep blue, triumphant gaze over her slaves. She stood, threw her arms back, and then with a wild shudder pulled her shoulders back: and then they sprang out, both at the same time – her young breasts.

– No one laughed, no one said a word. There was only a deep, breathless silence.

Were they weeping? Down on their knees? – All of them?

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The Goyita stepped back, threw a shawl over her shoulders, and sat down on her chair next to the organ grinder.

No one applauded; no one scarcely dared to make a move. It appeared as if they were petrified, the way they sat there and stood, spellbound and hypnotized for minutes.

Frank Braun thought: ‘She learned that from the animal trainer! – And she had surpassed her master! She understood how to tame the beast.’

The dancer stood up and slowly walked across the courtyard. Colonel Pearlstein, pushed a chair over for her, and she sat down. She said quietly:

“Give me something to drink. I am thirsty.”

The Colonel filled a glass, and she drank.

“It is your name day today, General – to your health!”

At that Pancho Villa woke up. He reached into the little basket, that the soldier held between his knees, and took out the black leather box, then handed it to her without a word. She took it, opened it, and then said with a smile –

“Am I supposed to shave?”

He was confused, like a schoolboy. He took the chest back, then grabbed the watches, bracelets and earrings that he had bought from the peddler and dropped them into her lap. He also pulled off the fat diamond rings from his fingers and threw them in as well. Colonel Pearlstein took chains and brooches out of his pocket, and also handed her a couple of thick packs of new Villa bills. Then the others all came up, filling her lap with jewelry and gold. But the general reached again into his wallet, and took out two hand full of gold pieces, and let them fall into her lap clinking. He laughed, happy at how the gold rang so prettily on the gold.

She called the organ grinder, who brought her purse. She put everything inside, carelessly, without looking.

“Thank you!” she said.

Only once and for everyone.

But it seemed as if the officers were anxious for the dancer to take their gifts. They pressed around, sitting, standing, attentive, like dear children in a circle.

‘These are robbers?’ thought Frank Braun. ‘Murderers and rustlers? – They are sweet little lambs!’

And the beautiful shepherdess held them all with the blue silk ribbon of her eyes.

“Drink!” she laughed. “Drink! Be happy, it is the general’s name day!”

Then they drank. No one thought to call the women back – oh no – the Goyita was here, who had danced the rumba for them. She sat with them; she drank with them, smoked with them, her, the Goyita –

Frank Braun toasted with her.

“Who remains from the circus?” he asked.

She returned his gaze. “Him there!” she answered, pointing at the organ grinder. “Him there – and no one else. – He was one of the stable boys. Now he is almost blind.”

“Blind?” he asked. “From the fever?”

She said: “I don’t know. He lay for a long time in the hospital in San Francisco – when he came out, that’s how he was. Now he travels around with me.” – She looked at him for a long time with her sapphire gaze – it seemed to him, as if a cool, blue water bathed him, washing away all the hot dirt.

“You have helped my priests,” she continued, “You are good, like the captain was. Like all the other Germans on that terrible ship.”

“What happened to the animals?” he interrupted her.

She explained:

“The captain helped me to sell them in San Francisco. Also, the tents and the cages – all of it. I received a lot of money – more than we believed. I have had Masses read for the souls of the Ring Master. And for Louison – and for all the others. – Only they didn’t want the tiger and didn’t want the wolf; they were both sick. I nursed them back to health – I had more luck with them than with poor little Louison.”

She spoke quietly and calmly, good-naturedly and indifferently, as if she was speaking of a long forgotten time.

“The tiger was bad tempered and ugly, clawed at me, was treacherous and mean. That’s why I sold him to the general – it is good that the bull conquered him. But the Wolf is thankful and good – he is my loyal animal.”

She told him of the captain of the *Thuringia*, of the officers and the crew. Told of her excursions in California and Texas, Sonora, and Chihuahua. And how she finally came to General Villa –

No one interrupted her, everyone listened quietly. Frank Braun kept his eyes on her, but it was not her blue eyes, that he sought. It was like a compulsion – he had to stare at her throat, lurking, waiting, to see whether

her shawl might move. Because underneath was a small wound with a drop of blood: he must see it –

Finally, she stood up.

Your name day is today, General Villa, I will dance one more dance for you."

She called to her organ grinder – he had fallen asleep on his chair.

"Leave him alone," she said, "Don't wake him up! Who wants to turn the organ?"

They all jumped for it, but tall Dominguez was the first to seize the handle.

She pulled off the light blue blouse, calmly, in front of all the men. She was so calm, so certain of her power over the men.

Frank Braun sharpened his gaze – but where was the little wound?

But this throat, and this bosom was white, blinding white. There was not the slightest red scratch anywhere.

He had dreamed it –

She wrapped a yellow shawl around her body, over her hips, breasts and shoulders. She stood up, and danced a short, simple *Ole*.

She took the flowers out of her hair, and divided them, gave them to everyone. But Pancho Villa received the largest and the most beautiful one. She stepped again to the middle, and said:

"Another one from Seville – and then I'm done. – The one, the one they dance in Chipiona – for their Madonna."

She danced, light footed and happy, bending and swaying softly. And she sang, a simple and naïve little Coppola:

"Morena, Morena eres,
Bendita tu, Morenura!
Que me tienes en la cama
Sin frio ni calentura!"

"Who is Morena?" Asked the general, "the brown haired one, of whom you sing?"

"Who?" She cried. "She is the mother of God, the brown haired mother of God from Chipiona!"

Once again, they raised their glasses, and drank once more to the dancer's health.

General Villa cried: “I don’t want any more wine. Bring mescal schnapps!”

Frank Braun seized the colonel’s arm.

“Do you have mescal?” he asked. “I have been asking every person in the entire city for it. And no one can find me even a single button!”

The colonel laughed:

“We are not any better! The general is crazy about mescal – like every one of us. It is strongly commanded, that all of it should be delivered here, if we can find any – but no one can find anything, and nothing is ever delivered! What we call mescal schnapps, has nothing of mescal, other than the name – only one fruit in 100 liters of strong alcohol.”

The dancer lightly touched his arm.

“What do you want?” she asked.

“Mescal buttons!” he replied. “They are little fruits, from a type of cactus. The Indians call it peyote –”

She said: “I will find you some.”

He looked at her in astonishment. “You? Where?”

“I don’t know,” she answered. “But I will find some.”

Then she left. She nodded lightly, and she smiled at those around her. But she didn’t shake hands with anyone.

Behind her went the organ grinder.

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The women slowly sneaked back into the court, one after the other. It became loud again, wilder and noisier.

Then more dice throwing, card playing, yelling and singing –

The Saint was gone – and the silent church once more became a whorehouse.

They brought large bottles, thick bellied and heavy, and poured pungent fluid into the glasses, mixing it with wine. There were no corks stuck in the bottlenecks – but brown dried things, like little roots.

Colonel Pearlstein handed him one.

“What is this?” he asked. “But he didn’t try it.

“A finger!” laughed the adjutant. “A dried finger from a Yankee that we shot down at Naco!”

He asked: “Is that the general’s joke?”

“No,” cried Pearlstein, “Colonel Gumucio invented it; he maintains that the schnapps tastes better that way.”

He put one arm under his, “Come, Doctor, we will go. What’s going to happen here now – is not very enjoyable.”

They rode slowly to the city.

“What do you want with the mescal anyway?” asked the Jew.

He answered: “I was just reminded about it. I have not had any for a long time – at least ten years or more. And I thought, perhaps it might help when I have one of these damned attacks.”

Colonel Pearlstein shrugged his shoulders: “I don’t believe in that stuff. But it is true that all the Indians swear by it.”

He pointed with his riding crop to a couple miserable, completely destroyed and burned down walls.

“A large house once stood there,” he said. “It was that of the American consul. They tore it down to the ground.”

“And the consul?” he asked.

“He was lucky. Someone hid him, and helped him to flee – they would have shot him dead, if they had discovered him – so they vented their rage out on the stones. I think the Yankees will be receiving a lot of abuse from us!”

“All of them!” nodded Frank Braun. “Yet even if you shoot dead every single American in this land beginning with the consul – President Wilson still won’t do anything.”

“Why not?” asked the Colonel.

Frank Braun said: “Pah, you know yourself! Because the Mexicans are supposed to kill themselves! Even more, because that’s the way England wants it – and, you see, Colonel, the president and the entire government – and the entire ruling and rich classes in the United States – they make much, much money, when they do what London commands! What you receive in weapons and ammunition, is enough to make each of you dangerous to each other. Yet such shipments serve no purpose for the Yankee – in contrast – he earns one bloody million after the other on war supplies that he sends to Europe – against Germany and Austria, and for Russia and its friends. The war would have ended over there a long time ago, if America didn’t daily send so much to the Allies, as they do every year. That is Yankee land’s greatest business – and as long as that blossoms,

they must have peace with you! – Because, you understand, Colonel, if America had to fight with you, they would need those weapons themselves and those munitions: In one blow the shipments overseas would be forbidden. But that would mean Germany's victory. Only later, when you are entirely weak, will the American give you the mercy stroke from behind – that is when there will be order. But as long as the war lasts in Europe – you will have your beautiful piece; can plunder the consulate and murder Americans to your hearts content! The war, which you need to unite your country, the outside war – can be brought about only one way!"

"How?" asked the adjutant.

"Only one way –" repeated Frank Braun. "If Mexican troops attack Texas or California."

Colonel Pearlstein didn't answer, and remained quiet for a long time, became very silent and thoughtful. They rode through the streets without a word. They came to the fonda. Frank Braun climbed down, let his horse be brought to the stall, and shook hands with the adjutant.

"Good night," he said.

The colonel shook his hand, then whistled, and stroked the neck of his horse with the riding crop.

He spoke slowly:

"I am an American, was born in New York. I would be with them, riding behind the Star-Spangled Banner today, if they would have had me. They didn't want me – pushed me away like a leper –"

He gave his animal a quick blow, that frightened it so that it jumped to the side. He corrected it quickly, turned around, and rode away at a trot.

Then he stopped suddenly, turned in the saddle, and cried loudly through the night:

"I will bring Pancho Villa across the border!"

Chapter Seven: Crystals

“In a very secret manner the Wesir,
Who is threefold wise, created a mirror for himself
Out of purest mountain crystal. – And when the Shah
Cast a glance into this magic mirror,
The book of destiny of the seven worlds,
Which is seven times hidden, lie there open –”
–Dschami, Salamân and Absal

Ernst Rossius met him at the station.

“How is it going with our detectives?” Frank Braun asked him.

“Fine, thank you,” the secretary said. “They will be glad to see you back, Doctor – dead or alive!” He stepped back, staring at his superior. “Really – more dead than alive! You look –”

“Never mind, just say it!”

“Like sour beer and spit!” His secretary burst out.

Frank Braun thought: “As long as it is nothing worse than that!” He had been forced to stop on the way, spending three days in bed in a St. Louis hotel. But the rest had not done him any good; he still felt just as tired, just as worn-out and empty as before.

Lotte van Ness was not nearly as worried as Rossius. Frank Braun thought:

“She only pretends not to see, because she doesn’t want to scare me. That’s silly, because there are mirrors, after all! Besides, I’m not frightened.”

That night he lay on the sofa with his head in her lap while she took his hands in hers and softly stroked his forehead. He told her about Mexico and about Poncho Villa.

She asked: “His name was Colonel Pearlstein, you say?”

He nodded and smiled. It was an obsession of hers that the Jews would do it – would help Germany. And she believed that this Jew Pearlstein would lead the Mexicans into Texas, and in that case the English and Italians, the Russians and French would get no more war supplies; and then Germany would win the war.

“And if Villa burns down ten Yankee cities, the English lackey that sits on George Washington’s chair still won’t do anything. Never, never!” Frank Braun thought.

But he did not say it; he let her continue to dream.

He felt quieter and stronger, his brain cleared when her slim hands touched him; he softly kissed the tips of her fingers.

“Where is your little knife?” she asked. He gave it to her; she hesitated for a moment, then opened it quickly.

“It is entirely clean!” she cried happily. But then – in the same breath she sighed: “You poor boy!”

“What is that thing supposed to be?” he asked. “Is it a magic mirror? Does it get stains when I am unfaithful to you?”

She nodded. “Yes – it get stains, large, ugly stains. But it is not a magic mirror – its stains are perfectly natural. Any little knife in the world would do me the same service.” She put it back in his pocket.

“Guard it well; someday it will be bloody!”

She got to her feet quickly, and kissed the question away from his mouth.

“Get up, my friend, dinner awaits!”

They ate and drank in silence. He reached for her hand across the table – he felt at home now, quiet and peaceful – like at his mother’s.

And at the same time, felt as if he had never held another woman in his arms.

Only her – Lotte Levi.

She had made herself beautiful for him – he noticed now for the first time. She looked radiant and exciting – she had never been so beautiful before.

Once she asked: “Are you glad to be back?”

He only nodded.

She dropped raisins in the champagne glasses; the raisins filled with air and swam like little silver fishes in the golden wine. They fished them out with their tongues, held them between their lips and munched them – from each other’s lips.

“Come!” she said.

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He rubbed his half-awake eyes – sat up in the large bed. The sun shone warmly through the yellow curtains – how late was it?

He closed his eyes, trying to think, trying to remember the stray thoughts of last night. But he could only remember the dream he had had.

He had dreamed of the dancer, the Goyita – Dolores Echevarria. He had dreamed of her as she danced the rumba, of her neck and her breasts, of the tiny red wound with the single drop of blood –

No – that was not true. He had not seen her in his dream; he had not seen her eyes and he had not seen her dance –

He was fantasizing now; he was daydreaming.

He had dreamed only of her smooth white breasts and of the small blood red scar –

He laughed and opened his eyes wide. “And it hadn’t even been there!”

He looked around – there was a dark red stain on the white pillow, a little smear, like a streak.

Had he seen that while he was half asleep? Was that what had caused his dream?

He jumped out of bed – where was Lotte? Her clothes lay scattered around the room, on the sofa, on chairs and on the carpet – her shoes and stockings, corset and dress.

He took a bath, dressed and went into the dining room. The maid brought him tea and asked him to wait, Madame was getting ready. So he had breakfast alone and it tasted better than it had for weeks.

Had he really been sick and tired? He – yesterday? He could not imagine how he had felt yesterday – he was feeling so fresh and healthy now.

He went into her library, walked around, and read the titles of the books piled on top of her desk.

– ***Sancti Petris Epiphanii Episcopi Cypri Ad Diodorum Tyri Episcopum, De XII Gemmis, quae erant in veste Aaronis***. Ah, that was about the breastplate.

“She takes it seriously,” he thought.

There was Franciscus Rueus’ curious book and a treatise on precious stones by Bishop Marbod of Rennes. He also saw the **Hortus Sanitatis** of Johan of Cuba, the **Grand Lapidaire** of Jean de Mandeville’s, and the famous **Speculum Lapidum** of Camillus Leonardus. On a chair by the desk

lay Cardano's book and close by were the works of Konrad von Megenberg. On the shelves he saw Josephus Gonellus, De Boot, Volmar, Finot, Kunz, Morales and many other authors – all were men who had written about precious stones.

On the other side of the library, there were entire shelves full of volumes dealing with prophecies, secret revelations of the future, horoscopes, and divination. There was Albertus Magnus, of course, the magic book of Ragiel, Plotinus, Jamblichos, Dionysios the Areopagite, Paracelsus, Eliphas Levi. He noticed a surprising number of Gnostics, but there were also representatives of the Indian, Babylonian, Talmud – Jewish and Alexandrian school, as well as Christian mystics. And in all the books there were bent corners, reading marks, and pencil notations on the margins.

"What is she searching for?" he wondered.

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He did not wait for Lotte. His secretary telephoned and asked him to come home to speak with a couple of men who were urgently waiting for him. He drove to 23rd St. and shook hands with the detectives in front of the door. Then he talked to the men and gave them a short report. In the evening he met Ivy Jefferson and her mother at the Claremont on the Hudson; Frau Jefferson's beau, the English consul general, was also there.

"You look splendid!" Frau Jefferson said. "Sparkling like champagne!"

He smiled. He must have changed considerably in the past twenty-four hours. Only yesterday he had looked like sour beer.

"Thank you!" he said. "And you also seem –"

But she didn't let him get a word in.

"It must have been marvelous on the West Coast!" she interrupted him. "It is a shame that we have never been there. I hope you accomplished your work in California!"

"Califor –"

He felt Ivy's foot on his.

"Of course you did! You sent us such pretty postcards – from Los Angeles and San Diego."

He returned the slight pressure of her foot.

“Yes, of course! Everything went beautifully. California is a lovely place –”

As they were leaving, he saw Farstin step out of her car, accompanied by two women. She gave him a quick glance which he failed to understand, and brushed past him. But then she changed her mind, turned around and looked at Ivy Jefferson, measured her from head to foot and greeted him with a mocking smile.

“Do you know her?” Ivy asked.

He nodded.

The car drove up and he helped Frau Jefferson in. Then he turned and offered his hand to Ivy.

“No,” she said. “Mother is driving with her beau. I have my new car here. I wanted to show it to you.”

She climbed into the left side of her big new Packard, took the wheel and invited him to sit beside her.

Then she turned and followed her mother’s limousine.

“You were in Mexico,” she said.

“So you spied on me!”

“No, I didn’t at all. It was the easiest thing in the world to find out.”

“How?”

She smiled.

“Didn’t you have your secretary send me a couple of letters? With the pretty heading: “Somewhere”?

He put your letter into another envelope and sent the letter to me just as you had ordered. But I called him up from Newport and asked him to telephone me every time a letter came for me. And the next time –”

“You told him that you were coming to town!” he finished her sentence. “And asked him to lunch – where?”

“At Delmonico’s, of course. He was to bring me the letter. He did – and three minutes later I knew where you were.”

“And what else did he tell you?”

“Nothing else! Unfortunately! I could not get any more out of him – and I really flirted quite nicely – with your kind permission. He made a slip in the beginning, but afterwards he was a bitter disappointment.

By the way, I told everyone that you were in California.”

He whistled.

“Why didn’t you tell them where I was? It is no secret. I just wanted to see a bullfight again – that was all.”

“And you needed almost ten weeks for that?” Ivy persisted.

“Certainly!” he said calmly. “I had to wait until there was one.”

She bent over toward him.

“You are lying!”

“You don’t believe me?” he asked. Then he acted wounded, attempting a genuinely sad face. But she laughed out loud at him.

“I was right! – You were an agent down there for your country. Every day the newspapers talk about how the Germans are down there trying to incite against us.”

“Child,” he said – and this time it rang serious – “your newspapers lie every day. The Germans in Mexico are happy that they still have their lives: they were long ago made beggars through the revolution, which Wall Street created. There is only one down there that is inciting the Mexicans – the Yankee.”

She sounded very snobbish: “Inciting against ourselves?”

He nodded: “It will come out in the end.”

He became silent; he could tell that she still wasn’t convinced.

“I was with Evangeline Adams,” she said after a while. “I had my horoscope done. And yours.”

“You too?” he thought.

He asked: “Who did you have do them?”

She said: “Frau Cochrane, Doctor Deed and Otis. They all said different things.”

“And you still go to them?” he cried.

“Naturally.” she laughed. “Tomorrow I’m going to Sullivan.”

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That – and certainly only that – Lotte van Ness had learned in America. Her library, her work and studies, her restless battles and researches in all these crazy books – that was European: German and Jewish.

But she traveled around, almost every day, going to one or another of the many swindlers, who sold childish phrases for good money. That

belonged to something else – that was the grand style of the New York upper class.

Nowhere, in no other country and in no other city of the world were there are as many swindlers as here. The rascals pursued their shameless and base handiwork with naïve cheekiness – mostly they were old women – here and there even a man. There were several thousand of them in all quarters of the giant city: horoscope tellers, oracles, fortune tellers, secret counselors, occultists, psychologists, Chiromancers, spiritualists, prophets, Theosophists – and with no end. This included the dirty, ragged women, that hustled people on the streets, offering to read palms for a couple of nickels, to the highly renowned professor Reese, whom they called the brain of the world. And they all earned good money, from a quarter up to ten thousand dollar checks.

– She had dozens of horoscopes done – each one always stupider, always more childish than the last.

She scanned them quickly, then tore them up. It was really astounding, what they came up with.

And still she kept going from one to another, always getting new ones –

Once Frank Braun told her: “There is one, just one single person in New York, who can really cast a horoscope. I met him yesterday on the street – he is an acquaintance of mine from Europe. He is the only one, who is not a swindler and really understands something about it – but he will tell you right out, that it’s all nonsense.”

“Take me there,” she demanded.

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Lotte van Ness picked him up the next day.

“Well, what’s the name of your magician?”

He replied: “Baron Otto von Kachele, university professor, Doctor of medicine and philosophy.”

“A university professor?” she asked.

He nodded.

“In South Germany – in Heidelberg, I believe, or in Freiburg – that was before my time. When I made his acquaintance, he was a spa Doctor in Thüringen.”

He told her the story of the man, while she drove through the streets. And it occurred to him, that he could tell hundreds of such stories – all different in the middle, but all the same at the beginning and at the end. The beginning: a sunny rise in the homeland – good family, golden youth, work and passion.

And then, at some time the tempest, the storm, the coming to America. And the end: a miserable arrival in this giant city, a pathetic, painful slow death through the long years. Deeper and deeper –

This one was a professor, master and doctor. As a student he had written for many learned periodicals, had made a name for himself, had become a private lecturer and a professor. He had been comfortable enough, had married a blonde, young thing, who adored him and cared for him. The path of his life appeared easy and even.

Then suddenly he lost his professorship, and had to leave the city, overnight. Something had happened – and there were rumors – but no one spoke them aloud. They wanted to retain him, give him every further opportunity. He took an inferior position in a spa, continued his studies, and became world-renowned as an Egyptologist and Assyrian expert. He spent his money buying rare antiques; but as a doctor he developed a very large practice in a short time, which gave him every possible comfort. Only, he didn't do anything. He didn't drink, didn't smoke, didn't gamble, didn't travel – never looked at women, not even his own wife. Nothing held the smallest interest for this man, only his Sanskrit and hieroglyphs.

What he was really sparse with was time not gold, he gave that out freely with full hands, while he worked through the nights.

Then – he was arrested, taken before the court, – and tried – he had raped one of his patients. In the beginning he had attempted to lie – then had confessed to everything, no longer defended himself behind the closed doors. In prison he was granted every possible facility, was brought all the books that he wanted, and allowed to work to his heart's content – there he wrote a monumental work on Assyrian horoscopes. Yes, they even went so far as to permit him to resume his practice – he began in a different city, and in a short time again had a splendid practice.

It lasted two years – then the district attorney received a new complaint. It was exactly the same: he had again abused a woman, while she was under ether. Young, beautiful? Oh no – she was over sixty years old and horribly ugly – she was suffering from nose cancer.

The district attorney knew him well – and would have gladly saved him! He hesitated a moment, then had a warrant sworn out – for the next morning. But that evening he went to the pub and talked about it –

And the others sat around: the judge, head Forrester, physicians –

What would happen next? Long years in prison? Or an insane asylum for life? One of them went to him that night – and spoke with him. The professor was perfectly reasonable and not at all insane. But when the talk came around to what he had done, he slowly shook his head.

"I don't know."

That same night they helped him get away, and after two days he was on the ocean.

And now he had been in New York for several years. The money, which his wife had brought with her, was long used up, and what he possessed of antiques had to be sold far below their value. His escapades in Europe were no obstacle here – no one knew anything about them. But he could not start a practice again – he would've had to take all the examinations over again. Thousands of German doctors had done that and it would've been just as easy for him – as it had been for all the others. But: he didn't speak any English. He read fluently anything in Sanskrit, runes and hieroglyphs, understood Phoenician, Ethiopian and Coptic – but his English remained entirely terrible. And – perhaps he was a little afraid of himself. Couldn't what had happened to him three times before happen again to him any day? He was afraid of practicing medicine – afraid of the hateful beast, that slumbered somewhere inside him.

So he plodded along. Like before he wrote very erudite papers for all kinds of scientific journals, like before he was a corresponding member of all kinds of learned societies. But in order to live, he did anything the moment offered. He invented a new gold mixture for dental fillings and sold it to a dentist who had it patented and made twenty thousand dollars on it – Doctor Kachele himself received fifty dollars as his share.

A swindle doctor, who was striving for a professorship chair in orthopedics at Columbia University, gave him a contract to write a history of this healing art and promised him a hundred dollars for it. He was very unsatisfied with him, because he had hoped that the manuscript would be ready in three weeks at the latest – and the German professor needed almost a year for it. He worked through the nights, discovered perplexing annotations about foot ailments in Babylonian and Assyrian times, and

developed the material with a thoroughness, as if it dealt with a treatment that would rid the world of consumption. When he finally delivered his pages, the American was beside himself with indignation: the book was much too long and in addition had a crowd of illustrations – that would make it more expensive to publish. He deducted fifty dollars because of that and another thirty, because an English translation would need to be prepared. There was one other condition: his own picture with the signature. – The work was published – naturally with the purchaser's name as the author; it won a prize in Harvard and the orthopedic chair was created for him at Columbia University. And then the Yankee showed himself to be a gentleman – he sent the professor a copy, which bore on the first page a very respectful dedication: "To my dear friend." And with it was a ten dollar bill.

But even such work was a rare stroke of luck. The learned Baron made his living with urine analysis. Day in and day out – for all kinds of doctors and quacks – he received one dollar for each analysis.

They walked down the steps, straight in from the street – seventeen steps. Down below in the basement was the laboratory. The poor professor sat on a stool without a back, his hands on his knees, bent over, as if half asleep, among his tumblers, retorts, flasks and test tubes, which shone in an unnatural ultraviolet light like poisoned moonlight. His hollow cheeked features were very ugly, with a long, unkempt beard and dirty, grizzled hair on his head. Shortsighted, bright yellow eyes, peered over steel rimmed glasses.

"Doctor," Frank Braun called to him, "how are you?"

The little professor jumped up, and reached out both hands to him.

"It is so nice that you came to see me, so nice. – I found the information that you were asking about, I have written it all down for you."

He ran to the back, picked up a manuscript from a table, a complete thirty pages.

"Here," he cried. "Here you have it all! – Your voodoo priestess, the Mamaloi, cannot be anything other than a human personification of the Coptic Berzelia – and much further back – is the wife of Moloch, whom the Greeks call Basileia. I assure you, we have a straight line – no not straight, it is much more a very crooked line – from the Babylonian goddess Labartu up to the child sacrifices of Haitian voodoo!

And the remarkable inversion, that the blood demanding Astarte gives her own blood, when –”

Frank Braun interrupted him:

“Thank you, Professor, you can tell me about all that later. Today I would like something else from you.

This lady here –”

He introduced Frau van Ness. Kachele turned around, then noticed for the first time that there was a woman in his basement. He reached out his hand to her, but he didn’t greet her – bitterly disappointed that his lecture had been interrupted.

“Come now,” Frank Braun mollified him, “don’t be angry, Professor! I have explained to Frau van Ness, that you are the only person alive who can cast a horoscope – strictly scientific and without a swindle.”

“What?” cried the little man. “Scientific and without a swindle? To examine old horoscopes, that is science, but to cast new ones is always a swindle! Aren’t there enough stupid asses in New York who get rich by casting horoscopes for still bigger asses? Why did you come to me? You have gotten lost, right next door lives such a magician – every hour of the day I see elegant autos pass by. – I can mix you up some toothpaste, if you want, or give you something for eczema – I will analyze your urine – real cheap!

That is honest work! But –”

Frank Braun cried: “Don’t get excited, Baron, it’s not worth it! If you don’t want to do it, you don’t need to!”

“No, I don’t want to!” shouted the professor.

“All right, all right!” Frank Braun calmed him. Then he added quickly: “This is a big laboratory – it’s a pity that it has no daylight. – Do you live here too, Professor?”

“No,” he snarled, “I have another room on 40th St.”

Frank Braun held him solidly.

“One room – for you and your wife? – How is she?”

“Bad,” hissed the professor.

“Is she sick?” he asked.

Doctor von Kachele shrugged his shoulders.

“Is that any wonder, considering the life that we lead?”

Now he had him, right where he wanted. He stepped up close to him, and said slowly and with emphasis:

“Your wife is sick – under nourished probably – just like yourself! And you have the courage, out of false pride, to refuse a contract that could bring you a lot of money?”

The little professor pulled his head into his coat collar, and then poked it out like a turtle.

“A lot of money, you say? – How much money?” he demanded.

“How long would it take?” Frank Braun asked back.

The professor thought for a moment.

“If I should be really serious about it – look up all the old charts –” he took out his handkerchief, polished his glasses, then wiped the sweat from his forehead. “It will take at least three months,” he continued, “perhaps four, if I am to do it properly.”

“I’ll pay you ten dollars a day – for four months!” said Frau van Ness.

He calculated.

“That – that would be – over twelve hundred dollars –” he stammered.

She nodded: “Do you accept?”

“Yes!” he cried out loud. “I –” but he interrupted himself suddenly. “Doctor,” he began hesitantly and clumsily, “I have known you for ten years now – but – we have never had any business dealings with each other –” he cleared his throat, tried to work up his courage, and began again. “You see, I have been cheated of my reward so often in this country –” his voice broke, became horse and very bitter – “always – always!”

Lotte van Ness pulled out her checkbook, wrote, and handed a check over to him.

“Here, Herr professor. And please, don’t begin until you have cashed it. That way you can be certain.”

He nodded, mechanically, almost without understanding. He folded the check and put it carefully away in his wallet. Then he took a pencil from the table, and walked over to the whitewashed wall. He drew a large, clumsy circle and within that the twelve houses.

“Does the lady know, what a horoscope is?” he asked.

Frank Braun laughed.

“I hope so. She has already had a hundred done – from your competitors.”

The professor wagged his head back and forth.

“Basically they are just as good, as the one that I am going to make for you – from the stars. Whether I sit down and fantasize something for you in

five minutes – or whether I put together in a longer work after finding out all the old Assyrian rules, what the stars signify in your hour of your birth – that is something completely different! It all depends on you, gracious Frau! You can have it done, like Alexander the great did – or like Jesus of Nazareth – then your horoscope will be accurate! Mine or that of the smallest fortuneteller on Coney Island –" he had completely regained his equilibrium.

"Would you like to hear?" he asked. "For just a quarter of an hour? I must tell you, what you will get for your money! – Sit down please, sit down!"

He pulled up a couple of chairs, one of which was still usable. His yellow eyes shone, trembling with joy, at being able to talk, to lecture, and to have a contract, over something that he was interested in. This was the single joy of the knowledgeable, to be able to share –

He explained the horoscope in detail, gave the ancient laws of the Assyrian astrologers, then moved on to the further advancements of the Babylonians, Phoenicians, Egyptians and Ethiopians. The Arabs, Greeks, Armenians and Persians – and the strangely sophisticated comments of the Alexandrian school.

He explained at great length, clearly and factually, why the horoscopes of the ancient world were so accurate.

"At that time, yes, everyone believed in the eternal laws of the stars. Their principles? – Some nomad created them, somewhere in the desert. Then they became the norm – became solid and sacred through the centuries, conventional, like the numeral system, like the alphabet. The ancient world believed so solidly upon them, that their historians – Herodotus at the top of the list – used them in their histories. He said, more than once; 'The history of these people as handed down by their tradition, is this: – but that is false; and in the stars it is written differently.' And then he told the history of the people, as it was written in the stars – and not, as he had heard it on his travels.

Back then man had learned – already for thousands of years – how to calculate the procession of the stars, for the past as well as for the future. They were not that interested in the present – much more interested in that which had been, and even more in that which would be. In the stars stood the story of Jesus Christ – oh, with all the smallest details – and you could read them there today just as well as they could thousands of years ago

before his birth. Isn't it chiseled out in the clearest Sanskrit on that great stone in the Berlin museum? You only need to calculate the positions of the stars for this year or that one?

But then – a couple times in a century – there comes an entirely rare constellation – and it was such a one, which changed the entire world in the fourth century before Christ. Someone will come from out of the West: a young hero on a white horse. He will destroy empires – to him the gates of the cities will open and the armies will flee before him like chaff. And he came, the Macedonian Alexander, and fulfilled everything just like the eternal wisdom of the stars taught. A Russian, Murajeff, had calculated the dates, and everything was correct, down to the last detail, day after day. Why? Because the entire Orient knew the prophecy and firmly believed in it, because they had been expecting the conqueror for many years already. That was why the cities opened their doors to him, why the gigantic armies of the Persian Kings fled before a handful of Greeks. And King Alexander played his role as emissary of the stars well enough, fulfilling – as much as possible, everything which had been prophesied by the astrologers, whose prophecies he knew so well, just like all the others. That's why he cut the Gordian knot, and why he made the pilgrimage to the temple of Ammon! – The only flaw was that Alexander remembered a little too late his role as the young hero who had been promised to mankind; we know today, that he was nearly 50 years old and no longer young, when he marched his army against Persia.

Perhaps he used makeup and powder – but, whatever he did to hide his age – he succeeded very well. –

In the history books all over the world he is still described as the young, smiling, and radiant hero!

Because it is written in the stars – and it is the stars that are right – not reality.

The other important prophecy was that of the Messiah. The Jewish folk were feverish and excited during those years – the time of the stars had come – now he was there, the one sent by God, was in their midst. He appeared – not alone – there were several others like him. Didn't John the Baptist go into the wilderness, didn't he baptize with water – just as Jesus? And didn't Josephus, the so-called Christ of the Jews, a little later lead exactly the same type of life as the Nazarene?

But why? Because – it was written in the stars.

Again and again the Bible tells us, that Christ did this or that – in order to fulfill what was written.

Written where? – In the stars.

And so rock solid was this belief in the eternal stars, that the Alexandrian school did exactly the same thing as Herodotus: they corrected history – according to the stars – the history of the apostles. And so – a few centuries later – the remarkable history of the performance of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple was included in the Gospel of Luke, like that of the flight into Egypt in the Gospel of Matthew.

These histories are written in the stars – every day they can be read again. The evangelist did not write it down? Well then, he must have forgotten – that's why all the holes needed to be filled in."

The little professor became warmer and warmer. His short arms waved around in the air, and he rocked back and forth on his broken chair. He spoke of the prophecies of the Aztecs and those of the Incas, which Cortez and Pizarro made good use of; he quoted one example after another from late Roman history and out of the Middle Ages, in order to prove, how magnificently every horoscope was fulfilled, as long as men did – what was written in the stars. He didn't stop talking for a minute, making good use of the opportunity, gushing like a happy waterfall.

Frank Braun stood up, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I must interrupt you, professor," he said, "I have an appointment –"

"But the goddess Labartu?" pleaded the other. "I still have to tell you, how the Phoenician Astarte –"

"Some other time," he said, "some other time! I really don't have any time today."

Lotte van Ness adjusted her hat.

"Would you like to come with me for lunch, doctor?" she said. "You can tell me about all of that."

"You?" he asked. "Are you interested in that?"

She smiled: "I believe – yes. I will report everything back to him."

Professor von Kachele searched for his hat, and finally found it in a wastebasket.

They went up the steps and climbed into the auto. Lotte van Ness had them stop at Tiffany's, climbed out, and immediately came back again with a little box in her hand. She opened it, and took out a slender, golden

necklace, which held a small nondescript crystal. She showed it to the professor, and asked:

“I had this made – do you know what it is supposed to be?”

Doctor von Kachele examined the crystal:

“You had a Griffin engraved on it,” he said slowly. “A Griffin – do you have a baby?”

Frank Braun laughed. “A baby? No, she doesn’t. Why do you ask?”

Lecturing again, a finger on his nose, the professor explained:

“That is a Phoenician superstition from Trecento, which presumably the Crusaders brought out of Syria – this thing here – is supposed to bring ample milk to women!”

Lotte Lewi nodded, took the necklace, and put it around her neck.

“You are right,” she said.

Frank Braun stared at her:

“Lotte, you – you need milk?”

“Yes,” she said quietly. “Milk. – For my child. A lot of milk – red milk.”

* *
*

“Nonsense,” Frank Braun thought. “Foolish nonsense!”

But he could not get rid of the thought. Again and again his eyes wandered to the beryl which Lotte had given him. And he remembered the old stones in her breastplate.

The next day he again descended into Kachele’s cave.

“Tell me professor,” he asked, “is it possible that precious stones actually possess the strange properties which superstitious people have ascribed to them through the ages? What I mean is – do you know of any actual case? Is it possible?”

The little professor coughed.

“Why not? Every child knows the strange properties of minerals – everyone has at one time played with a magnet and iron nails, or thrown sodium or potassium into a washbasin to watch it burn! All children have played with mercury which is always in a liquid state, or set fire to magnesium because it burns with a brighter flame than daylight. Aren’t those marvelous properties? Practically every mineral has its marvels – and

we only know about a few of them precisely. All metals oxidize except gold which does not combine with oxygen. Think of the silent emanations of radium, or consider iridium which does not dissolve in any acid, not even in aqua regia. And what about calc spar with its double refraction – and tourmaline, which becomes electric by heating, and topaz which becomes electrified by rubbing!

Hornblende does not burn, meerschaum is hygroscopic and turns into a jelly when dissolved. – There are marvels wherever you look."

"Even healing properties?" asked Frank Braun.

The professor laughed.

"But Doctor, you know that as well as I do! Haven't you ever taken sodium sulfite which is much more effective than castor oil? Haven't you ever used carbolic acid, and learned about its disinfecting qualities? Consider this – what would medicine do without minerals! Caustic potash, caustic soda, silver nitrate, all have a caustic effect; millions of people use mercury, and even more eat iron. Carlsbad, Vichy and all the other mineral waters are used for thousands of diseases. And there are still physicians – and authorities among them – that are solidly convinced, that you can cure all the diseases in the world with iodine and arsenic!"

"But then," Frank Braun said hesitatingly, "then it would be quite possible that –"

"That some of the strange properties which our ancestors ascribed to precious stones are true? Without any question! Much of it is pure imagination, certainly; and often quite childish. But much, much might very well be true. And as you know Doctor, our so-called exact science is often childish enough: it is only true until we discover something to prove that it isn't."

* *
*

Young Rossius stepped up to Frank Braun's bed.

"It's noon Doctor! Wouldn't you like to get up? Your servant is here with your tea."

He nodded sleepily. They brought him breakfast in bed; he ate and drank silently, trying to think. It had been this way for quite some time, that

he was confused in the mornings, and always had to strain to remember what had happened the night before.

“Your lecture is typed,” the secretary said. “I woke up early, took a bath and then went to the typewriter. I also had some tea made for me – with your permission.”

Frank Braun asked hesitantly, “You bathed here?”

“Where else,” retorted the secretary. “I slept here last night – on the sofa in the middle room.”

Yes – he remembered now. He had come home late in the night – there sat young Rossius, waiting up for him. That lecture, which he was supposed to pick up today – about – what was it about anyway?

Never mind – it would occur to him later. But that was why he had asked his secretary to come over. He had paced around in the room, and had dictated for an hour and a half. Yes – and he had told the young man that he could stay overnight, in order to type up the speech in the morning. That was it – now it had all come back, thank God!

“You gave me a fright doctor! – Last night!” laughed the secretary.

“I?” he asked. “How so?”

“You are a sleepwalker!” answered Rossius.

He jumped out of bed.

“Nonsense!” he cried.

But the other said: “Not nonsense at all! You came into the room, and started doing something at the table. Then something fell down – that’s why I woke up, and turned on the light. That didn’t bother you.

You stood there in pajamas with wide open eyes – fumbling around in your bureau.”

“What did I do?” he asked.

“Nothing special,” the other replied. “You took out a couple of things, scissors – a comb – then you pulled something out of the pocket of your pajamas, and stuck it back in again. You also opened your razor and closed it.”

“That was it?” demanded Frank Braun. “And how do you know then, that I was not awake?”

“No, you are not awake,” insisted Rossius. “I called out to you – and you didn’t hear me. I stood up, stepped up right in front of you – and you didn’t see me – despite your open eyes. Then I took your arm and led you

back. You were very docile and allowed yourself to be brought quietly back to bed. After two minutes you shut your eyes and were fast asleep –”

“Well that was sensible, anyway,” he grumbled.

He took his robe and went into the bathroom. After a while he came back, just as tired as ever, not a bit rested.

Is there much to do today?” he asked.

But he didn’t wait for an answer.

“Come Rossius, let’s play a game of chess.”

He stretched out on the sofa, his upper body supported by a half dozen pillows. He scanned through the newspaper, in between times he threw a quick glance at the board, and shoved a piece.

Then he allowed the lecture to be recited, correcting it here and there. Gradually he wasn’t listening anymore, became lost in dreams.

He suddenly interrupted Rossius.

“Bring me the blue dossier,” he said, “you know the one, the one in which we keep the anonymous papers – you know, threats and such things.”

“It is no longer there!” the secretary said. “You just told me, that I should destroy it all. So I burned it in the fireplace, with everything that was inside it – yesterday, while I was waiting for you and used the time to put things in order a little bit.”

“Did I say that?” cried Frank Braun. “It was very stupid – very stupid!”

He took a pillow, threw it up in the air, and then caught it again.

“Do you remember the letter we got a few days after I returned from Mexico? You know the one – that was so very mysterious and warned of a conspiracy against me?”

Rossius nodded.

“Oh yes Doctor. You thought that it came from some foolish woman – that it was pure foolishness. There was something in it – even if the men in this country are asleep, the women are wide-awake – and that they would find the means – and had found them – to put a stop to your activities and those of your kind.”

“Perhaps it was only the childish outburst of an old maid, who believed all the lies in the English papers, like so many million others. And who now sees a crazy murderer in every German! – Perhaps! – Perhaps also there was something to it. – One way or the other, my boy, I almost believe: that I am afraid.”

Rossius laughed out loud. “You – doctor? You afraid? Well if you are, I never noticed it before.”

“Neither did I –” he spoke, shrugging his shoulders. “At least not when I am awake. But – I believe – I am afraid – when I am asleep.”

He was silent for a while, then continued, slowly, considering and thoughtful:

“I have dreams, – before I only had them, when I was awake – and they were more of a brooding, fantasizing and daydreaming. Now they are genuine, childish dreams – in the deepest sleep – and they are always the same. Of some wound on a breast – and of red, dripping blood. I don’t like these dreams.”

He jumped up, and paced with quick nervous steps around the room.

“And this sleepwalking last night – who knows, whether it was the first time! Am I some neurasthenic adolescent, an anemic schoolgirl? A hysteric female in menopause or a moonstruck woman who is having her period? – By the hangman, no! I am afraid – I tell you – have a plain common fear – of – of – something!”

He sat down again, sucked on a cigarette.

“And this fear must have some basis. I am sick – you know that – since I have been in this goddamn city.

Not today – not at this moment – but I just was – and perhaps will be again tomorrow. It is some silly disease – of which no one knows, how and where I contacted it – and I the least. Seven – no, eight doctors have examined me – from head to foot – van Ness ordered it – and not one of them found anything. ‘A little weakness of the nerves,’ they said – that is the fat phrase. ‘I should not smoke so much,’ they advised – I know that myself. And: ‘Get well – till next time! Thank you very much!’ – now that takes skill!”

He became silent again, moving his head back and forth, considering. Then he continued:

“It is a tiredness – without any reason. A bodily weakness – often a sudden dizziness – all without any apparent cause. But the greatest feeling is a complete emptiness – that is what it is – just as if I don’t have a single drop of blood in my body anymore. As if the blood in my veins has been eaten away – as if something has been sucking on me, drinking me dry. Just like children do with an orange – they make a hole in it and then suck it out: I am the orange!”

He drew up his legs, and lit a new cigarette.

“I am afraid,” he emphasized, “that is certain. Still not during the daytime – but certainly when I am asleep: also this fear is unconscious, and comes out of some deepest instinct. But then – why, what am I afraid of?”

He hesitated, and stared at his secretary.

“Tell me, do you believe – that it could be some slow poison?”

Ernst Rossius laughed out loud.

“Calm yourself, Doctor, we are no longer in the Middle Ages!”

At that he continued.

“What do you mean? – I tell you, the world has never been as insane as it is today – just look at the newspapers! The slaughter of hundreds of thousands – when did the sun ever see such death? And why – for what? Every government uses the same phrases in their school books – and the lines are just as absurd, just as shamelessly stupid as those of the others. Our foolishness is much more fantastic, then that during the time of the Inquisition, or even, when the raging hordes of flagellants roamed through Europe turning it into a madhouse. – New York, Rossius, is the most romantic city in the entire world, but today it still lives in the darkest of the Middle Ages!”

“What are you saying?” the secretary interrupted him. “Modern New York – with its subways and skyscrapers and a hundred thousand automobiles!”

“Even so!” he cried. “Even so! With these high and low trains, in which there are more bugs and fleas then anywhere in Naples. With these skyscrapers, which transform so many streets into dark mine shafts. And the automobiles – you know as well as I do, that many women don’t dare to climb into a taxi cab alone, one whose company they don’t know! Why? – Because kidnapping here is a daily occurrence, because they are afraid of being kidnapped, in broad daylight. You can find opium dens by the dozen – not only in Chinatown – any policeman can show you one. And heroin, cocaine, morphine – whatever you want – in abundance enough to spare. Our Blacks slaughter children to their snake God in their voodoo cult here just as well as somewhere in Haiti! – And when do they ever find a murderer in New York – black or white? Maybe one in every fifty! We have slaves by the thousands – did you read the last report about the padrone system at the harbor – slaves, chained just as tightly together, as they ever were in the plantations of the cotton magnets! – Magicians everywhere! –

In almost every house lives a Pythia, that takes money away from the stupid ladies. Prostitutes in all the locales and theaters, on every street – females, almost even more males – here you can purchase every infamous lust, if you only open your wallet wide enough! – Like in the Rome of Alexander VI – the Middle Ages – a most wonderful Middle Ages! Much more than that really – and that makes it so tasteless and it takes on the patina of the Renaissance – the overly fat butter sauce of Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy. The muckrakers and reformers, who chase after every outspoken word, every advertisement in the newspapers, who prosecute peddlers because they sell pictures of women that are a little too scantily dressed. The teetotalers and holier than thou's, those who ban theater and games on Sunday, who make the blue laws, close salons in the front, only to slip in at the back. But you see, even this Inquisition is of the Middle Ages – only it is notas strong and cruel as it was in Spain – instead it is cowardly, small, English and common. But one thing is certain, nothing, nothing is impossible in this giant city, this infinite garbage can, into which the entire world has thrown its garbage."

He laughed out loud.

"The two of us are also in it – you and I. But it is good, for a person to know themselves, to know how things stand – that way you can crawl out, when an opportunity presents itself, otherwise one's soul could get corrupted – and you would scarcely know it! – Then you see, Rossius – you would get accustomed to it – isn't that true? And then you would feel comfortable in all this mud and dirt."

He stood up again, went to the window, and pushed it up. Then turned back.

"Poison just like all the others – why not? Quick and slow – it's entirely possible. What the Medici could do and the Borgia – the New Yorker can certainly do as well! Just like they celebrate their orgies, although lacking in style and taste."

He laughed, then went up to his secretary.

"Tell me, have you ever participated in an orgy here?"

"Yes –" said the other, "that's what we call them. With beer or whiskey – with girls and singing."

Frank Braun interrupted him:

"Where is my invitation? Search for the one from the Moon Ladies. They are having their annual celebration – I will take you along."

Rossius searched around.

“Here it is,” he said. “For the nineteenth – that was yesterday.”

“That’s too bad,” said Frank Braun, “that is too late. But in late August or winter – remind me – when we get another invitation.”

– “The mail?” asked Rossius. “Would you like to see the mail?”

He waved his hand.

“No, not now – later! – Unless there is something special?”

The secretary considered, then reached into his vest pocket, and pulled out a paper.

“Oh, I forgot – I was in the library yesterday – was searching for Saint Ambrose – it gave me a lot of trouble! Here is the hymn, which you wanted – of the immaculate conception.”

He handed him the slip. Frank Braun read out loud:

“Fit porta Christi pervia,

Referta plena gratia
Transitque rex, et permanet
Clausa, ut fuit, per saccula.

Cenus superni numinis

Processit aula virginis
-Sponsus, redemptor, conditor,
Suae gigas ecclesiae.”

“That is beautiful,” he said, “it is magnificent! The power of imagination of those men of faith is astounding. Who can do something like that today: to make something so abstract seem so real! This power of imagery – it can make the most implausible, most impossible, the most incomprehensible sound so natural and logical – with just the ring of a few words!”

Ernst Rossius said:

“I attempted to translate it, last night, as I was waiting for you –”

“Read it,” Frank Braun nodded.

And the secretary began:

“The Virgin’s womb, the gate of Christ, so full of grace
and wonderful. – The King, who chooses this vessel,
passes through, And yet it remains locked – as it has
through all the centuries – this immaculate gate.
-And remains locked, as the divinely conceived
of light emerges from out of the virginal
column of her body – the sweet, cherished Savior,
the founder, and mighty altar of his church.”

Frank Braun took the paper out of his hand.

“Not bad,” he said, “not bad. – But you know, what that – one part is?, *‘Transitque rex’* – Ambrose certainly meant Christ for that – and Christ brings the Holy Ghost into us – or God the father! In any case, in that sense it is genuine and most certainly Ambrose! Yet, it is still stronger, still more powerful: the gate of her body remains locked at the entrance of the divine, just as with the coming forth of the Savior! Locked, immaculate – through all the centuries!”

“Thank you for the friendly recognition,” laughed Rossius. “But tell me, Doctor, what did you want with this hymn anyway?”

“And why then, Ernst Rossius, did you translate it?” he countered. “Just out of boredom?

“Certainly not!”

– There are dozens of volumes here, which you are interested in, and which you could have read. And that report for the committee, which they have been asking of us for three weeks now, which you haven't even started! Instead you sat down here and tormented yourself for an hour, over a couple of mystical Christian fragments trying to translate them into tolerable German verse! – Why?"

"I don't know –" said the other.

"Well, I don't either!" cried Frank Braun. "It is presumably, because it is something God wills, that we also have a part to play here – in this medieval witch's Sabbath in the city of New York. These ambergris golden colors are missing – and perhaps it is our destiny, that we should mix them in!"

Chapter Eight: Hyacinths

When anyone is bedeviled by evil spirits or suffers a curse, so that he is about to lose everything, then take a loaf of pure white bread, very hot. Cut a large cross in the upper crust – but be careful, that you do not cut all the way through. Pass a hyacinth stone along this cross and speak these words:

"May God, who took all precious stones away from the devil, also cast away all evil spirits from me, remove all curses, and save me from insanity."

– Saint Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen (12th century)

When Frank Braun came back home that afternoon, his secretary was sitting very thoughtfully in front of the typewriter. Both hands were in his lap.

"Well, what have you found out?" he asked.

"I have discovered," answered Rossius, "that I am your fountain pen, even your swizzle stick. Even more remotely – your horse, wife or bicycle, if you had one – presumably I am none of these things. Yet aren't there still things, which a man does not gladly loan out, because they might become somewhat damaged or might not be returned?"

"Hm, –"he said, "a toothbrush. One most certainly uses them over and over again and most might be a little damaged – but one does not gladly loan them out!"

His secretary replied:

"Then I am also your toothbrush. Which you can use to your heart's content – yet every day I must help out with another newspaper – or with some committee! And because of that I am only an appendage – you loan out the typewriter – and me along with it!"

"Just tell me if you don't want to do it!" laughed Frank Braun. "No one is forcing you."

"I know!" sighed Rossius, "that is just it. Overall, I earn a few extra dollars – my Fräulein bride needs another new hat! – Herr Tewes called earlier –"

"What are you supposed to write for him?" he inquired.

"Ask him yourself – I don't know. He's coming here, will do his dictating here."

He jumped up.

“Someone’s knocking, he must be here already.”

But the old servant announced the attorney, Christoph Frylinghuis.

“Him?” gulped Frank Braun. “Why, in the name of God.”

The attorney entered. But Tewes followed at his feet; threw his cane and gloves on a chair.

“Cigar – Doctor?” he cried. “Where is your cigar box?”

“Excuse me, for coming here – but I must make a committee speech for Wachtel – you know, that fat butcher, the chair of the Defense committee. Editing it is impossible – fifty people in one room – one can’t even understand one’s own words. Home is too far away – that would be three hours to Yonkers and back! That’s why I came here – at least here a man can be undisturbed.”

“What do you mean undisturbed?” cried Frank Braun.

“God, yes, naturally you are disturbed!” laughed the journalist. “You must get accustomed to that. – Tea? Can Rossius make us some tea? – You already know, that Belgrade has been taken – we just received the news. Then – yes, please give me your advice – what will be passable for my master butcher! I struck out everything that was even the slightest human and left only the fat fisted phrases – and then I drew a line through them as well! It would spare me half the time – and would be a great help with the war!”

He ran around, was everywhere with his long wings. He grabbed the cigar box, put the teakettle on the electric stove, brought cups, and searched through his notes.

“Will you just sit down!” hissed Rossius. “You are always in my way. First drink some tea – that will give you the needed calmness – then you can dictate your masterpiece to me!”

– “Now, what brings you here, Herr Frylinghuis?” Frank Braun spoke to the attorney. “Are things going well in your new job?”

“Well?” sighed the attorney. “I was thrown out after two days.”

He was short and pudgy – earlier, he must have been fat once, but now his clothes hung loosely around his body. Only his head was round and remained red – a bowling ball head, which appeared to protrude like asparagus on an equally strong and equally red neck. He was shaved and had only a little hair left on his skull – but there were scars, scars everywhere. On both sides, over his chin, cheeks, temples and ears, on the

top of his head and down to his forehead and on his nose – they shouted through all the streets: I am a German student. His right arm was uncommonly short – it was no wonder that anyone dueling with him could score a hit where ever they wanted.

This man was his problem child–there was no work for him to do: he was an attorney and nothing else.

He had become an orphan early in life, had squandered his little fortune at the University and in the student corps, it had lasted just to the very end, and he had been lucky to take his examinations. He had succeeded in getting work in the colonies – they had sent him to Samoa – there he had learned how to drink whiskey. Then he had somehow crossed the Pacific – and now he was here, searching, searching – and finding nothing.

“Why didn’t it work out at the farm?” he asked him.

The attorney slurped his hot tea.

“Because I have hay fever! This is now my third attempt to live in the country – one day, two days – it can’t be any longer. Then my eyes run, then my nose runs and I toss around as if in a fever – I can’t blame anyone for chasing me away.”

Frank Braun hated this man, whom he had to continually help. He was unlucky, he thought – and he brought misfortune!

“Call the employment agency,” Tewes proposed. “Those gentlemen have an entire series of academic positions listed.”

The attorney shook his head.

“I did – but it didn’t work out. It was always the same – I couldn’t do it. I have never held a job for more than a week – and that was only through grace and compassion! I can’t do shorthand or type and my handwriting is unbearably bad.”

“Then why don’t you learn?” asked Tewes.

“I tried – it didn’t work!” lamented the unfortunate man and stuck out his little hands with their sausage like fingers.

“I get writer’s cramp, after I have been doing it for a half hour. – I have tried thirty different occupations by now. I was a dishwasher – more than once – but I am so clumsy, that I broke more dishes, then what I earned in a day. I wore holes in my shoes and got blisters on my feet as a sign carrier. I was a “greeter” in a restaurant – that paid well and I would’ve continued doing that, even as belittling as it was. But the innkeeper had to send me away – some of his guests liked me very much, and they laughed about me,

but the others claimed that they couldn't eat, because I reminded them of a living tartar beefsteak pacing back and forth."

"Do you speak English?" inquired the editor.

A new sigh crept out from the attorney's lips.

"Yes – yes! I can read everything and understand and speak it. But in the South Seas I became so accustomed to that damn pigeon English, that everyone here laughs out loud at me. That has already cost me three jobs. The people think, that if they want to have a black, then they would rather have a genuine one. – I was also a security guard and announcer and –"

Frank Braun interrupted him in irritation.

"That's very good, we already know, everything that you were."

But he immediately regretted his gruff tone, and added:

"Before I leave for the summer, I'm thinking of Doctor Ulrich of the German recruit organization, perhaps he can find something for you – we can ask him."

"He already turned me away –" groaned the attorney. "He sent me to Rochester, where I was supposed to establish a new German recruit organization. It went very well, I had propaganda printed up, enlisted many participants, and was soon very popular at all the gatherings. But –"

"Why, you unlucky fellow," cried Tewes, "why did you quit?"

Three sighs – and a long despairing sob.

"I had to stop speaking. Here is my speech –" He took a manuscript out of his pocket, and waved it around in the air.

"It is just as good as anyone else's. But it doesn't work – I cannot endure the stage. When I stand up there, a childish fear comes over me – and the only thing that comes out of my mouth – is a pathetic stutter. The people laugh in complete happiness; finally one took my paper and read my speech to them. I did not do any damage in Rochester – certainly not – but I must admit Doctor Ulrich was right, when he thought that I was unfit for propaganda work: to do that a man must be able to give speeches!"

"Yes, man," Tewes laughed as he handed him a cigar, "well what are you good at then? What are you trained in?"

"I – am – an attorney," coughed the poor devil.

He took his business card out and gave it to him.

"Attorney Christoph Frylinghuis, thank you. I was active in Marburg with the –"

The journalist threw a quick glance at the card.

“You know, man, you must call yourself a doctor – that’s how it’s done. When you run around here with that face, without the title of Doctor, everyone takes you for a bumbling student – that seems suspicious.”

“But I did not take my doctor exam,” said the attorney.

Tewes cried: “Made them – didn’t make them – what’s the difference! Do you imagine that anyone over here would ask for your papers?”

But the other answered – and for the first time there was a little hardness in his voice:

“No – I will not do that. That would be a swindle.”

“How gullible you are!” scorned the journalist. “Haven’t you noticed yet, that this entire country lives only on swindles? When a man doesn’t have anything and isn’t anything and can’t do anything – like you – and despite that he still wants luxuries, any little swindle that comes to mind – will get a person astoundingly far in New York! You can believe that.”

“I believe every word you say,” said the attorney, “I am convinced of it to my bones.”

He turned to Frank Braun.

“Herr Doctor, that’s why I came to you this afternoon. – I know that I am a burden to you, I know it! You have helped me so often –”

“How much do you need?” he interrupted him.

“No, that is not –” answered the other. “With the money that I earned at the farm I have just paid for my laundry. But I don’t have a place to sleep – not a penny in my pocket – and haven’t eaten since yesterday –”

“Go make a couple of sandwiches,” Frank Braun turned to Rossius.

“Thank you,” said the attorney. “But, as I said, that is not it! And if you give me money again – it will be gone in a few days. And if you get me a new job, I will be chased away from it after twenty-four hours! –

You, doctor – I – I –”

He swallowed, drooped and sobbed.

“Yes, then what do you want, Herr Frylinghuis?” he asked.

The attorney pulled himself together.

“You – I –” he began. “I beg you, I plead with you, Herr Doctor, get me a passport! I have served, I was a staff sergeant – and they would enlist me as a lieutenant – over there I can do something – over there! Here I will die –”

Tewes burst out with a loud laugh.

“You, you want to go to Germany? And if the president handed you the most beautiful Yankee passport with his own hand and with his own signature on top of it and it was certified by the ambassador to his superior King George – with your face, you would still most certainly not end up in Germany, but instead, arrive in some English prison camp! Those dueling scars mark you as a German student and you will remain one to your blissful end.

– Yes, we have all the identification instructions used by the British sea officers, those who search the steamers; Doctor, show them to him! Right on the first page it says that they should arrest anyone; who has German dueling scars on their face – entirely without regard for all other papers. And you, Herr, have scars for twenty – German dueling scars, as the English so nicely call them. No, Herr, no! We spare no money, and use – despite them – every great and little swindle and every dodge and gimmick – in order to ship officers overseas and all others whom we believe can be of use to Germany. But we have not one red cent remaining to enrich an English prison camp with one more prisoner!”

The old servant came in bringing a plate with butter bread.

“Here is the new cord for the electric cooking stove!” he said.

“Thank you,” said Frank Braun, “Now the old stove can still be used.”

He took the brown cord, and played with it.

“You must console yourself, Herr Frylinghuis, such a journey is out of the question, you must see that. Please – get hold of yourself!”

The attorney crammed the slices of bread in his mouth.

“Naturally I can see that,” he moaned.

“Ah– The Schmisse! I once I counted them – they struck me eighteen times. I was buttered by them – every time – like no one else. But I remained standing, Doctor, remained standing –”

“Like a rock in the sea!” ridiculed the editor.

“Don’t laugh,” He pleaded while chewing with full cheeks, “it was really so. They could have hacked me to mush – and l still would not have flinched. I was a second three times – a fencing partner, you know – even though I, with my short wings, was the most pathetic bumbler in the entire student corps. Still, for semesters after me they said in Marburg:

“He stands there like Frylinghuis.”

“I would have never made you a second,” said Frank Braun thoughtfully. “Even though I was a very good fencer, especially if it was

one of my good days. – Tell me, Frylinghuis, have you ever licked your own blood at a duel?”

“Licked my own blood?” said the other in astonishment. “What do you mean by that?”

“Oh – just what I say,” continued Frank Braun. “It was at my third fox duel; at which I was supposed to drill with some fellow. The Prussian struck me through the temporalis, and the blood flowed warm over my left eye. Then I forgot that I was holding a weapon in my hand. I saw nothing – but I felt, how red the blood flowed, so red and soft and warm.

“Are you crazy,” hissed my good friend, who was my second, “shut your mouth! Stick your tongue back in!” – That’s when I first noticed that I was licking my own blood. I did as he said – but it came out again, my tongue – the blood pulled at it. ‘You duel – like a pig’, said my bodyguard.”

“And did you always do that?” asked the attorney.

“Always? No!” he answered. “I tell you, that often enough I fenced very well, struck several with a rapier and hooked quarte. But then once in a while – it would happen again – without my wanting it and having no consciousness of it. Then I would lick my own blood, forgetting completely where I was and what I was doing. Tell me, Tewes, if I should now suddenly lunge at you, in order to strike you on the head with a knife, what would you do?”

“In that moment?” answered the journalist. “Well my first move would probably be, to throw my arm high, in order to parry the blow.”

“That was exactly what I once did at a duel,” said Frank Braun, “when I was drunk from my own blood. I tore my left-hand out of the belt from behind me, and threw it high –”

“What?” cried the attorney aghast. “What? – That is horrible! – Hopefully you were thoroughly buttered?”

“Naturally!” laughed Frank Braun. “Immediately – such foolishness is not permitted at our duels: they called me a wretched whimp! I was dismissed, for an undetermined time – as sometimes happens. And then they gave me the three worst fencers, which they could find, in order to drill me again. Oh yes – licking blood is not in good form at a duel.”

“I would agree with that!” nodded the attorney with deepest conviction. “Nothing like that happened with me.”

But then, suddenly, his little bit of composure collapsed again.

“Of what use is my good standing today!” he said ruefully. “Lord God, what will I do now? How shall I even begin?”

“There is nothing that can be done with you,” scorned the journalist. “No one here needs lessons – in good standing!”

Frank Braun said:

“Hang yourself.”

It came out of his teeth, without his willing it. He was thinking it – and spoke it at the same time. It rang seriously – and he was sorry for it instantly. And yet he repeated it, stressed and very definite:

“Hang yourself. That is the only thing that remains for you to do.”

The attorney took the slice of bread from his mouth. He stared at him, and stammered:

“Are you serious, Doctor? – Are you really serious?”

Frank Braun held his gaze.

Something compelled him, pulled him forward. It seemed to him, as if he stood on the stage, as if he had to make some proposal to the public, the secretary and the journalist – To prove what he could do, what kind of a man he was: to rule the others, force them down to his feet, to make them slaves and into creatures without wills of their own, into play things for his frivolous moods.

“Dear Herr,” he began. “Have you never thought of it yourself? You are a member of the student corps, are an officer – is your honor and self-respect really that lost in this country? The war will last for still four more years, you know that as well as we do, there’s no way for you to get over there – never! And it is just as impossible for you to find something here. You are unfit – for anything – that you can think of.”

“Yes – yes –” moaned the attorney.

“What is the use of howling?” he continued. His voice rang unmercifully, cutting and sharp. “You must become clear about this – that you do not have the slightest prospect in this country. And in the best case you are further marked – so as to receive a miserable job for one or two days, which will earn you a couple of dollars, and then will be searching around again in a couple of weeks. And in the meantime, dear Herr, you live from – begging! Just remain sitting, don’t get up – it is necessary, that you for once see this thing clearly with your own eyes. As long as you receive money from me and from others, editors and your regulars, you can call it pumping – even though you know very well, that you will never have the

slightest possibility of giving the money back. Hear this out just once, isn't it true? Then you will run to the support chest of the pastor – to help you again – until you see, that there is no more help for attorney Frylinghuis. Meanwhile, you will know what starvation is – but one can starve for a day or two – if one has a certain hope of finding something, the means of finding a way to eat. Watch for the day – when you will not be getting a single nickel more."

The fat tears rolled over the cheeks of the unfortunate.

"And you, Herr Doctor, you would leave me in the lurch?"

"I?" he answered harshly. "Naturally!"

– He knew that he lied, knew that he would give this man – even though he hated him – in spite of that, would continue to give to him, again and again. But at the same time he felt, that he himself was ashamed of this childish weakness, this foolish consideration, which wiped every "no" from his lips. How did people do it, find that soft spot of goodness in the core of his heart, and make it wider with their suffering and with their love – over and over again? – He scorned all of them – no, no, this man had no right to see into his breast.

"That's how people are here," he said, "and I, like a thousand others."

"You give more away, then you use for yourself!" cried the attorney. "I know it, I know it very well!"

Frank Braun pulled his shoulders high.

"And even if that is true – I do so, because I am frivolous and careless and have no real understanding of money and of all possible obligations. But you see, once in a while I also have an enlightened moment and then I know, that it is a monkey shame to give you money. The dollar bills that I give you; I take away from others; those who could use them better. I can push off your certain collapse for a couple of pathetic days, and in the meantime someone else will die, who could have easily found some skilled labor! It is criminal, to give you money!"

The attorney wiped the tears from his scarred cheeks. He stared at him for a long time, speechless, without understanding.

"You – you don't want – to help me anymore?" he stammered.

He wanted to say "No" – and couldn't. – "Now is enough," he thought. "Now give him something – and you must give him more this time." – And then again: "That is cowardly – you must send him away." –

But he couldn’t do it, couldn’t do it: slowly he shoved his hand into his pocket to take out his checkbook.

Then, suddenly he jumped up:

“No!” he screamed. “No! No! – Hang yourself!”

He tossed the electrical cord over to him.

“This is a magnificent noose – hang yourself!”

The attorney picked the cord up from the floor, breathed deeply and heavily. His voice sounded weak and soft, but yet strangely firm. He spoke:

“You are right – it is certainly the best.”

He played with the cord, looked at it for a long time, then said:

“May I hang myself here, Herr Doctor?”

“Thank you very much!” laughed the journalist. “That would be a beautiful mess! Police – an investigation and a great outcry in the newspaper – that is exactly what we don’t want! Go to Central Park tonight – you will find a wonderful selection of trees and streetlights!”

“It is just –” said the attorney, “now I have the courage.”

And again it seemed to Frank Braun, as if he stood in front of the public, throwing out some phrase with large gestures, and whose reaction he was certain of. He stepped up to him, tapped him lightly on the shoulder.

“Please, as you will, Herr Frylinghuis. Make use of your strong mood and my rooms. Don’t trouble yourself over it, we will put everything in order behind you. – Go through the bedroom, there, next to the bathroom is my clothes closet. There are hooks on the wall that are strong enough.”

“Thank you,” said the attorney, entirely calm and very composed. “May I finish the butter bread? Please, a cup of tea! – And if you would be kind enough, to give me a cigarette?”

“Please, help yourself!” he replied.

They sat around; the attorney ate, drank and smoked.

“Do you have any other wish?” asked Frank Braun. “A message? A letter?”

“My parents are long dead –” replied the attorney. “I don’t have any closer relatives. If you would be so kind, to write to my seniors – and then to my corps.”

“Gladly!” he nodded. “What should I write?”

“Oh, that I am dead,” said the other. “Only – don’t mention how, please.”

A little smile tugged around his lips.

“‘He stands like Frylinghuis’ – that’s what they say in Marburg – that is still something, something. And I would not like it, if they were to say: ‘He hangs like Frylinghuis.’”

Then he stood up.

“I thank you, Herr Doctor. For everything, for what you have done for me. And also for today, you have opened my eyes wide open.”

Frank Braun didn’t speak a word. He seized his lower lip with his teeth, and bit, bit.”

“Live well, gentlemen!” said the attorney.

He shook everyone’s hand, bent over, and tied the noose. Then he took his cord and went slowly to the back.

Rossius watched him go, then turned to hurry after him.

“What are you doing?” cried Frank Braun.

“I’m going to bring him back!” answered the secretary. “He’s really going to do it!”

Frank Braun hissed:

“Stay here!”

The editor laughed:

“Really? He won’t hang himself any more than I will or you will! You will see how pretty he comes back after a short time – and then it will cost us some extra pain money.”

Frank Braun didn’t answer. He stood, erect, unmoving, in the middle of the room; looking toward the back.

The manuscript of the attorney’s speech lay between the cups. Tewes took it up, and paged through it.

“I can use this for my butcher master, almost as it is! – Give me your ink pen, Rossius! – Just strike out a couple of lines – then three sentences to begin it and just as many to close – this inheritance spares me a half hours’ time!”

And he sat for a while, editing, striking out, and writing, like one, who thoroughly knows his work. Then he handed a couple of pages over to the secretary.

“There, type that up! – Only the pages that are strongly corrected – and those, those that are too dirty.

The rest is for my butcher master, just as smooth as we have inherited it.”

From in back they could hear a loud sound, Rossius stood up.

“He’s singing!” he said.

“A pathetic swansong!” laughed the editor.

“Do you know what it is?”

They became quiet and listened. Softly, but perfectly clear it rang through the rooms:

“Brother drink up! – You are still young!
There is always time to be worn out when you are old!
Full glasses are for young people –

So let us today
Be young and happy!”

Frank Braun thought: That is the pleasure song of Hasso Nassovia in Marburg. When was the last time I heard that?

And it rang:

“Brother, smoke up! – You are still young!
There is always time to be worn out when you are old!
Long brawls are for young people –

So let us today
Be young and happy!”

Again he thought: that one has never given up – and he won’t do it now. He is not afraid – not of hard times or of a fight!”

And then the third verse:

“Kiss her brother! – You are still young!
There is time enough for impotence in old age!
Pretty girls are for young people –

So let us today
Be young and happy!”

“His philosophy of life is not bad,” nodded the journalist. “Smoking and drinking and kissing – I like to do that myself, much more than slamming together political shit or fancy speeches for the butcher master!

Oh yes – but you still have to grow up – and you haven’t my boy!”

Then, even louder, clearer them before:

“Borrow brother! – You are still young!
There is time enough –”

It broke off.

Something fell over, then thumped loudly against the wall. Tewes laughed out loud.

“Borrowing again – naturally – that is the core of his life’s wisdom! And he is completely right – as long as he can still find people like you Doctor, who have some sentimental memories of student days that melt their hearts like butter. Ah, I know them well, the old gentleman of Bonn and Heidelberg and Strasburg! They toy with the citizens, with their lives, for days and weeks and months – but just like now someone comes and chats about traveling on the Rhine and rambling about, of acting out and of duels, of piercing through and countrymen and other cherished glories – then you forget, forget that you are a doctor and in the newspapers and whatever! Then your blurry eyes glow, then your belly wobbles, it itches in your sausage like fingers and your fat beer heart throbs for the good old times! And that old stinker – devil take me – God knows how, makes you become young again for five minutes – and you get drunk on the handful of worn-out words, as if you are drinking the finest wine!”

“Shut up!” said Frank Braun. “What do you know about it!”

But the editor continued scornfully.

“The beginning was good – smoke up, drink and kiss! Then he comes right back to borrowing again! –

How much are you going to pay for the serenade Doctor?”

No one came. It remained quiet and still in the back room. The secretary stood up from the type writer, took a couple of steps.

“Stay there!” Whispered Frank Braun.

“Write something!” Cried Tewes. “The attorney will be back here soon enough.”

“He is not coming!” Insisted Ernst Rossius. He sat back down, inserted a piece of paper, and typed a few words. Then suddenly he sprang up, and ran quickly through the rooms.

“Idiot!” Grumbled the journalist. “I need my manuscript! We have wasted enough time.”

Then the secretary’s voice rang out shrill and screaming.

“Doctor!” He cried. “Doctor!”

“What is it?” replied Tewes.

“Come, come quickly!” He shouted again.

They went through the room with quick strides. There he hung in the corner, between the clothes, the tips of his shoes scarcely an inch from the floor. Next to him lay a tipped over chair.

“A knife” demanded the secretary.

But Tewes said: “No – you can’t cut through the cable quickly enough. Set the chair back up.”

They set it back up, placed him on the chair, and held on to him tightly, untying the noose from around his neck. Rossius took a second chair, climbed up, and untied the cable from the hooks. Then they stood him up on the floor.

He came back to consciousness after a few minutes. He staggered, sagged, held himself against the wall, and buried his head in his arms. Pulled himself together – and then turned around toward them with a jerk.

“Fools!” He bellowed, “fools! Why didn’t you let me hang?”

He struck around himself with both firsts, wild, raging, screaming, raging like one possessed. Frank Braun received a good blow over his temple and his eye. Then he landed an impressive kick against the left leg of the tall journalist.

“Thank you,” he screamed, “that was too easy! Always too soft, my roving Roland!”

Then Rossius seized him from behind, and clamped both arms tightly around his body.

“Let me go you dog!” Screeched the attorney. “Let me go.”

The secretary held him tight and tall Tewes grabbed his hands and held them fast.

Just let it out my boy,” he laughed, “it will help.”

He still wrestled, still attempted to tear himself free. But the wild power of the moment soon left him, and his head sank tiredly onto his breast, and his legs trembled, as if they wanted to collapse under him. So they led him, more like dragged him, out into the other room, and sat him down in the large leather easy chair.

Frank Braun rang for his servant.

“Would you like some wine?” he asked the attorney.

The other moaned: “Whiskey –”

They gave him whiskey, and he drank, without water, and in great gulps. He didn’t speak a word, just sat there alone, drinking, and brooding.

The secretary sat back down at the typewriter. The German journalist paced back and forth behind him, dictating quietly. Frank Braun went into the bathroom, and cooled his quickly swollen eye.

Then he came back, sat down next to the attorney, gave him a cigar, and held out his lighter. The attorney took a couple of deep puffs.

“What do you have there?” Asked Frylinghuis suddenly.

“You gave it to him!” Laughed the editor. “The first clean hit that you landed in your entire life – it was a solid hit.”

Then the attorney turned to the others. And he laughed, a silent laugh, childlike, good-natured, almost happy. “Too bad, that –” he began. But he didn’t say it out loud.

Tewes took it up.

“Too bad that I didn’t get hit some more, is that it? Well – perhaps next time! And now – how are you feeling?”

“Thank you,” said the attorney. He stood up, took a couple of steps across the room. Then he sat back down again, raised the whiskey glass, and brought it to his mouth. But he didn’t drink, and put it back down again on the table.

“And what now?” He cried. “And what now?”

Frank Braun filled out a check and gave it to him.

“We will try this once more,” he said. “Please – take it! And – then go.”

The attorney took the paper, shoved it into his pocket, and thanked him. He searched for his hat, shook hands with everybody, and excused himself.

“Gentlemen, please excuse the disturbance,” he said. Then he left.

The journalist hummed:

“Brother – they will save you – once more!”

Then he asked jokingly:

“Well, how much, doctor?”

“What is it to you?” Cried Frank Braun.

“Fool!” Spit tewes. “Butter yellow fool! Three times now – isn’t it?

Are you ashamed to say how much it was? Well, at least you have received something for it – and can parade around with it very pretty like, for at least a week or more.”

Then he went to the telephone.

“Who are you going to call?” Asked Frank Braun.

“German connections in Newark – where you were going to give a speech tomorrow!” Cried the editor.

“I need to decline for you, because you are not able to go. And then I will call Doctor Hertling so that he will vouch for you. You can’t step in front of the public like that dear Herr, not like that!”

* *
*

The journalist was right. His eye swelled up, and at first it was red and blue, then yellow and green – every morning his secretary matter-of-factly described a new mixture of colors.

“It is like a rainbow today Doctor!” He laughed. “Did you know that you have won respect in the eyes of our detectives? They asked about it naturally – and I explained to them how you boxed in the gym with Jess Villard and lasted three rounds with him. The fellows are extraordinarily proud of you! – Do you have anything for me to do this morning? Otherwise I will drive over to the city newspaper office – they need me there.”

“Go ahead” he replied. “Come back here again by teatime!”

The telephone rang; he spoke with Ivy Jefferson for a couple of minutes. No, he couldn’t go out riding with her – not tomorrow either. He himself would call, when he could see her again.

Then it was Lotte van Ness, who called him. And again he said no – and no! He really couldn’t go – she could come here if she wanted.

He was more than happy to stay home that week. He lay on the sofa, for hours, brooding over the tired emptiness which had seized him again. He thought back to what it had been like to feel well again – and what he

could do against this tiredness. And he always returned the thought of the anonymous letter – some poison, he thought. And: it came from women.

His servant announced Frau van Ness but she didn't come alone; Doctor Samuel Cohen was with her. He was also one dear to Lotte Lewis: German and Jewish at the same time. He made a good impression as a Phoenician, looked like a rich aristocrat in Carthage. His wavy hair and large round eyes, a little shortsighted. Full lips were overlarge, his skin was pale and a little unhealthy – and required some sunlight.

Very muscular, almost fat – not enough exercise. Unmarried at that – a young forty-year-old – who needed a woman – to care for him. Born in New York, but German in upbringing and sentiment – also German in his education, much more than Jewish. Very accomplished as a doctor and no less as a speaker with all of the opportunities in the entirety of New York. Clever and skilled – and accomplished at that.

"Just lay there quietly," he said. "Now, what's with the eye?"

"It thinks it's a chameleon!" Answered Frank Braun. "Very good of you to come, Doctor, but it is not really necessary. Keep it cool – right? – With sterile –"

But Frau van Ness interrupted him.

"I asked him to come with. He will examine you."

Frank Braun looked at her, and shook his head.

"This is the ninth time now Lotte. With all respect to Doctor Cohen – do you really believe that he will find out more than the others?"

He sighed, and fell back into the cushions.

"Please, examine me then, if you want to!"

The doctor began his work, and did it competently enough. He spoke very little, and asked only the necessary questions.

"It is entirely certain, he concluded, "that your body is completely healthy, inside and outside! Except for that blue-eye there – and naturally the chronic cough is from cigarette smoking."

"I will smoke less," cried Frank Braun, "really, I already know about it!"

"You could do that if you wanted," replied the doctor. "You can live for three centuries with smoker's cough. But would you please give me a little more information?"

"Just ask," he answered.

Whether he ever had malaria? When and where? Yes, many years ago, in Singapore and Colombia, but he had never had a relapse, not in the tropics and not in ordinary climates. Whether the sickness had been strong? Yes, very strong. How was it treated? With quinine naturally – with powerful doses.

Whether he knew, where he had first developed the disease?

He thought back. The first outbreak had occurred on a Lloyd steamer – so he had come down with it in the South Seas. Where? – In New Guinea.

It sounded harmless enough:

“Oh, you were there too? You must tell me about it sometime. But tell me, aren’t there still actual cannibals, man-eaters? Have you ever seen any?”

Frank Braun laughed.

“Whether there are man-eaters? As many as you want – everywhere in New Guinea, new Mecklenburg, new Pomerania, Bougainville and Buka. Every single Papua and Kanake from every tribe would most certainly swear a most holy oath, that he has never tasted Kai-Kai – that is human flesh. But at the same time would claim that the neighboring tribe doesn’t know any better! – But all the tribes are cannibals, whenever they have the opportunity to enjoy such delicacies and go unpunished.”

“All of them?” Asked the doctor. “Do you really think that every single one eats human flesh, whenever it can get it?”

“I said all the tribes,” answered Frank Braun. “The missionaries maintain that it is only a few individuals in each tribe that swear by this delicacy, while several others of the same tribe wouldn’t touch it. Each taste is very different – for everyone in man eating countries.”

“Hm,” said the doctor, “I have just read a very interesting article about tropical diseases in the Scientific Journal. The author maintains that this savage, unquenchable hunger for human flesh, is a disease which one suffers from – that its symptoms are somewhat like malaria. I can’t lie to you, that the symptoms are very similar to those which you suffer.”

Frank Braun laughed out loud.

“You are charming doctor!” He cried. “That is New York – that is genuinely American! But, dear God, I have never had the slightest craving for human flesh! Tell me, is the author of your article also an American?”

“No,” replied the Doctor, “he is a German, a professor at the Institute for tropical diseases in Hamburg; he was in the South Seas for many years.

You should go back to Hamburg – that is the only place in the world where anyone understands even a little of this remarkable tropical disease."

"Thank you for the good advice," laughed Frank Braun. "I will make use of it, as soon as the English allow free passage to the apothecary. – From which insect sting does this cannibalistic malaria originate?"

"Not from any insect," answered Doctor Cohen.

The doctor from Hamburg maintains, that it is carried by a species of bat, by some flying dog, which attacks its victim in sleep and with the smallest of bites creates an opening to suck out the blood. It sounds fantastic enough, that such a bite should have not only similar consequences like the sting of a mosquito, but also develop the thirst and hunger for human blood and human flesh. But it does not sound impossible, when you understand all of the things, that the sting of a tsetse fly, the bite of snake or a mad dog can bring forth. There are obsessions and delusions of all kinds that are not in any way exceptional."

Frank Braun listened, became uncertain, quiet; then threw a long glance at Lotte van Ness. He finally whispered:

"What do you make of it Lotte?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I don't know," she answered.

That strengthened his suspicion.

"Tell me, weren't you also in New Guinea, with your husband?" He asked.

"No," she said. "We came with an English steamer on the way back from New Zealand. We went to the Hebrides, to the Solomon Islands – and then traveled immediately back to Yokohama."

"Ah –" he nodded. "So you are also in the South Seas? Did you also have malaria?"

She looked at him strangely, her eyes glimmered in a superior smile, her lips pulled themselves up, twitched softly.

"No," she said softly, "never!"

But he thought:, "You lie!" – He turned back to the doctor.

"Do you believe, that this strange disease is contagious? Even from human to human?"

Doctor Cohen shook his head.

"It could be possible – or not: I have no idea. No one can tell you that over here – that's why you must go overseas."

Frank Braun nodded in agreement.

“Yes, they will certainly know over there! Tell me Doctor, isn’t it true, that all of Europe has caught this strange disease and a good part of the rest of the world as well? It occurs to me that way. How would it be if the people of the world became acquainted with your theory – perhaps in a letter to the **TIMES** or the **WORLD** or the **SUN**? Then the Germans and English, the Russians and French and Turks and all the rest of them would know and understand that it is all just a regrettable error, only the consequence of a very contagious South Sea disease, which evokes cannibalistic desires and forces them to eat away at each other? – If people would realize this the war would be at an end tomorrow, and everyone would march in regiments to Hamburg to the Institute for Tropical Diseases, in order to be immunized. Then you Doctor, and your enlightened colleagues from Alster would allow Frau van Ness to set up a monument in front of the Hamburg dock in Hoboken – isn’t that right, Lotte?”

She said:

“Pull yourself together, I beg you! Can’t you remain serious?”

He stepped right up to her, looked sharply into her eyes, and said:

“You have known me long enough, Lotte Lewi. You should know that I am never more serious than when I joke like this.”

But she looked away, and shrugged her shoulders.

“As you will.”

He stepped up to the window, and drummed on the glass pane.

“That’s it,” he thought, “that’s it!”

But what should he do about it? What? He strained his brain, and couldn’t think of anything. No relationship, no cause or effect – nothing! He was sick – yes – felt very tired – squeezed out, like a lemon. But there must be something else, something that did all this, that sucked on him and left him drained.

Lotte – Lotte Lewi? Whom he had loved through all these years, more than any other woman? It was silly and absurd.

And yet a strong feeling raised up in him: it had something to do with her. It was all tied in with this Frau – and not only with her alone – oh no – also with others –

He stepped back to both of them, who were quietly talking with each other.

“Excuse me Doctor,” he said. “I did not mean to offend you.”

Doctor Cohen shook his hand.

“Perhaps a new symptom will show up that can point us in the right direction. If it does let me know!”

He excused himself, cordially and warmly; Frank Braun accompanied him to the door.

When he came back the Frau stepped quickly up to him:

“You are suspicious!” She said. “Of me.”

He answered:

“Yes – of you.”

Her laugh sounded shrill.

“Of me! – You?”

Then she took his hand and quietly continued:

“Tell me, in what way?”

He allowed her to caress his fingers.

“In what way? In what way –? – I don’t know.

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That night he woke up, wide-awake, completely clear in a moment. He pressed on the button, held his finger on it, for long minutes. I need to ring incessantly, he thought, otherwise the old ass won’t wake up. Then the servant arrived in shirt and trousers, very sleepily; and asked what he wanted.

Yes, what did he want anyway?

“Bring some wine,” he said, some of that which he had bought last week. “I want to try it out.”

It was muggy that night, yet he wasn’t thirsty. He stood up, threw on a kimono, went into his office, and stepped up to the open window. The moon was somewhere behind the stone wall, but he saw its brilliance in the pale street. It was very quiet.

Then the servant came back, this time in a jacket and in a stiff shirt. With both hands he held out the silver platter on which the glass and bottle stood.

Frank Braun sat down in the easy chair.

“Pour some for me Fred!” He said.

The wine was cool, bubbly and fragrant. “Saarwein” he thought, “Maximi Grünhäuser”. He looked at the label, satisfied, that he had a real treasure.

The servant stood motionless next to him, like out of wax, colorless and pale.

“Why aren’t you shaved, Fred?” He asked. He didn’t wait for a response; just motioned him away:

“It’s okay – you can go back to bed.” He heard the soft stride of the old man, heard the door softly shut.

He emptied his glass, stood up, then sat down at the writing table.

Something compelled him to pick up the quill, to take the page and straighten it. Something dictated, said: “Write!”

So he wrote.

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The Story of the White Wolf

There were many strong walls, where the forest climbed up to the mountaintop. Where the spring sprang down over rocky boulders, where the oaks quit and the Scots pines and dwarf mountain pines stood. Where the flocks of crows colored the white bushes, where the blackbirds chased the hawks and beat them to death high above in the heavens.

There were many wolves, young and old. Gray and brown, even yellow. A great folk that ruled the land, like the crows ruled the sky. With whom they shared their plunder, often enough, giving them the remains of the meal, when they were sated.

One of them was a white one.

He came into the world like they all did and grew up like they did. Sucked on his mother’s tits, and devoured the red flesh, which she brought – just like his brothers. He grew big and strong – jumped out with them in the hunt. Like all the others.

But he was white. They were all yellow and gray and brown – but this one was white, without even one spot – pure white.

They didn’t like him, none of them. They said that he was a lamb, that the wolf bitch had found him at the edge of the forest. Dragged him to the

den – after they had eaten his father, a foolish lamb, and his mother, a trembling sheep. They were so sated and had eaten so much, were so full and round, that they didn't want any more mutton for weeks. That's why she suckled him along with her own young ones.

But now he had suckled on wolf's milk and become big and strong. But he was still a lamb – a white little lamb – and was only still alive in the world, because the old wolf bitch had gorged herself so much.

After they had chased down a fawn, or a doe, when they sat or lay around the various wild animals, eagerly snapping with their sharp teeth, tearing the carcass apart and coloring their lips with blood, then they snapped at him, biting him away. And an old wolf, a very dark one, said that he would not take him along on the hunt, not him. He glowed through the bushes – and that brought bad luck.

Once, as they howled loudly while chasing a deer, he and ten others chased it over the meadow to the roaring water, where it couldn't go any further. As they formed a tight half circle around it, it stood with lowered head facing them, it's mighty weapons prepared for good use, the others played a joke on him.

They said, that he should charge forward, should act as if he was going to lunge. The buck would only pay attention to him alone. Then they would attack from the sides and from behind, and he could lunge for its throat, where he could bite through the jugular vein –

He did like they told him. But the old buck knew the game, and let none of them out of his sight. He turned his murderous weapons from right to left, back and forth around the half circle.

They howled at the white wolf, that he was a coward and had held himself back where it was safe, that he didn't dare come up to the front. That he was a lamb, and no wolf. That they had known for a long time, a white little lamb! And they teased him – that he should lunge, if he had the courage.

Then he lunged with open jaws straight at the enemy. The buck seized him easily, took him high on the sharp pointed antlers and pierced him before throwing him into the bushes, then the buck turned around, bellowing and roaring at the others: who fled and ran away. For a long time the white wolf lay between the thick bushes, coloring the green moss red with his blood. He finally awoke, limped and crawled through the forest to the large clearing, where the pack gathered when the sun sank. Then they all

laughed and jeered and ridiculed: now it was certain that he was a lamb! Only sheep's blood could be so stupid as to jump into the antlers of a deer.

Those were his first wounds. In time his wounds healed and he became smooth and white like before, even more powerful and much stronger. Then he began to hunt alone; first rabbits and pheasants, soon chasing the fawns, and breaking into the herd. He strangled a large sheepdog, overpowered a strong Roe buck and tore it up. But at night when he came to the clearing of the wolves, they ridiculed and asked whether he had eaten grasshoppers and frogs? One demanded to know, whether toad tasted any good, and another said it had seen him at the river, where he lounged in the soft grass like the cattle did.

They all laughed. And the old, dark one, asked him, whether he could moo as well.

That's when he decided he would show them that he really had wolf's blood, savage and genuine and even more than they did. He slipped through the woods for days, until he found the track of an outsider.

That's what they called the bucks that lived alone and entirely by themselves, not in the herd with others. They all feared them, and no wolf dared to attack them – they didn't flee, didn't get tired from being chased, and knew how to cover their back, meeting with deadly antlers anyone who came too near them. He saw the track and followed it, found the powerful buck at the edge of the forest, and slipped up to it. He howled out, bellowing, as if thirty of them had broken out of the woods and not just him. He lunged forward and hung on to the throat of the buck, biting, biting through, until he was brought down with the heavy burden of the dying animal. He drank the blood from out of the torn throat, then sprang up, and cried out so far, that it tore through the air, the savage call of the wolf, who has just brought down a large wild animal.

They came up, one and then another and then many of them. They listened to what he said, drunk from his chase, drunk from the hot blood – how he, himself, entirely alone, had chased down and killed the powerful outsider – They didn't give him an answer, just sat down and ate, ate. But when they became sated, when only bones lay around and pathetic scraps for the crows, then one of them thought he didn't believe the story. And the others agreed: he had found the buck, dead, wounded or dying, at the edge of the forest. It must have been dead for days, you could taste it: it was a

carcass and not a fresh kill of the hunt. At that he slipped forth through the night, over the wide meadow –

He became a hermit, like the buck which he had chased, and lived alone for a long time. He was very lonesome. Then his courage grew and his strength and his pride. Sometimes he would meet the others, when they followed a track. Then he would say that it was his wild animal and it belonged to him. He attacked them, snapped at them and bit them away. Once he encountered the large, dark one – in the early morning, before the sun had risen. He didn't howl, didn't growl , but attacked him in a second.

Strangled him dead. And the others slipped away into the bushes.

Then the entire forest knew, that a white wolf was there, and that it was him. And the herd knew it and the hounds and the deer and even the predators. He climbed up – high, high, where only stillness towered, only birds still flew and crippled pines waved in the wind. He climbed down across the meadow and the fields, far down, until he came to where people lived. He slipped his bounty from out of their corrals. He was a white wolf – was a wolf and was white – and everyone in the forest knew that.

They put a good price on his head, a hundred bright gold pieces. But even then they were more eager for his white pelt than for the red gold. They marched out by the dozens with telescopes and muskets, hunting with many drivers through the forest. They even saw him – once and then again – shot quickly – and several lukewarm bullets singed his white pelt. They set dead falls and traps with sharp iron teeth, laid poisoned meat on the banks of the river, there, where he liked to drink. But he only ate the booty, which he himself killed, letting their pieces of meat lay there for the stupid crows and foxes. Once he stepped into a trap hidden under a bush, the iron snapped together over his leg; he tore at it, tore and tore until even the hide was removed from over the bone, stripped away like a stocking. And he pulled his leg out, bloody, raw and ragged. He lay in the thicket, through many nights, licking, until the bone was covered with flesh again, and fur had formed over the scars and tears.

Then once more he broke into their herds, starving, wilder than ever, tore up an ox, tore out its throat.

Licked the blood, and let the meat lay.

Many wolves were in the forest, very many of them, yellow and gray and brown ones. What was in there now?

The shepherds guarded their herds with barbed wire fences and dangerous hounds – and when an animal was still torn apart, they cursed and then forgot it. And the hunters chased the wolves, and anything wild, shot them, and killed them – that was nothing remarkable. It was only a wolf attack – and nothing more. But this white one – they must have it. They hated him; they were greedy for him, dreamed of him – farmers and shepherds and hunters – all of them.

In the winter they came back.

They gave a lamb a drink, that poisoned its blood, but would allow it to live for a day or two. It was a strong poison, and its strongest reaction would first show on an animal that ate the flesh of the lamb!

They hung a large bell around it, and drove it into the forest – where the hungry wolves soon came.

But the white one tore it down, he slurped it's blood, and let the others eat the red flesh.

On the next day the men surrounded him. They placed iron traps in a large half circle, and dug pits with traps, from the river to the edge of the forest. They were so thick, so hidden, that no one could get through them. Then they came up from the meadow, by the hundreds, hunters with their guns, shepherds with thick clubs, and farmers with long forks and flails. And hounds, many hounds – they howled loudly in the cry of the hunt.

The white wolf heard them very well and he knew that they wanted him, and him alone. Him – because he was white. He jumped through the forest, ran and raced under the oaks, then up between the pines.

There the hounds stopped , just in front of the boulders, and behind them came the hunters and drivers; he saw them very well, just as he stepped out of the forest. But they saw him as well , the white one – muskets flew to their shoulders, the explosions of the shots, the bullets chasing over the snow. One hit, just one. Somewhere on his neck – just a flesh wound that colored his pelt bloody. He turned around and raced back into the forest.

He ran down to the river, broke through the snow into a deep pit, fell on an iron trap that snapped, seizing his left leg. He tore himself loose, leaving a large rag between the teeth of the trap. He jumped into the air, until the side of the hole collapsed. He attempted again and again and still again, pulling down the black muddy earth, until he finally seized the edge with his forelegs. Then he braced himself, and jumped up.

“There,” cried one, who hit him a heavy blow with a club. Something broke inside him, he felt it. But he ran further.

Again a shot and again he was hit, it hit one of his legs. But he limped, crawled, and pushed himself through the woods, deeper and deeper into it. Then he lay somewhere breathing heavily, under the bushes. He was completely covered with mud and blood, torn, shot and dying. And in his body burned the poison, eating at his intestines – they burned like the red fire of the men.

He saw two of them come up to him. They remained standing there looking at him. “There he is,” laughed the shepherd. “He also ate some of the lamb – shoot him!”

The hunter said “No, that is an entirely common wolf, which you can kill later with your club. Come, we are wasting time – he must be out there, the white one!”

At that the wolf howled:

“Shoot, shoot – I am the white wolf.”

But the two marched on past. And the shepherd laughed:

“Die alone you miserable beast.”

He looked after them, for a long – long time, until they disappeared between the trunks of the oak trees.

“I am the white wolf,” he moaned – –

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“Stay a while,” said Lotte van Ness. “Professor von Kachele is coming this evening.”

He sat back down.

“He is? – How far is he with your horoscope?”

She smiled:

“He is very thorough, it appears – I still need to wait for that. By the way he interrupted that project – I have asked him to write down the information which he had sketched out for you. You didn’t have any time then, but I listened to everything he said, and then I asked him to write it down for me! He finished it yesterday – that’s why he’s coming.”

“You purchased the information Lotte?” He asked. “Well – what are you going to do with it?”

She shrugged her shoulders.

“Perhaps I will give it to a magazine – perhaps give it to you – what do I know. Why should I only buy jewels and books, why not a manuscript once in a while?”

The professor came and could barely wait to begin his lecture. He ate a lot, but hastily and with many interruptions, always prepared to share something about what he had done.

“Later, dear professor,” begged Frau van Ness, “Later! First we eat!”

They went into the library; there she had him sit in a large easy chair. She herself sat on her sofa, shoving many pillows around her to support her elbows.

“Now begin!” She said.

He began in a second. Spoke very rapidly, stumbling and hurried, interrupting himself in between times for short seconds, paging through his manuscript, searching for some learned citation, and reading it.

His voice sounded harsh and loud, not raspy, but rattling and strangely bleating.

Frank Braun sat in back, between the books, in a giant armchair. His legs were crossed and stretched out in front, his arms on the soft fabric. He puffed on a cigarette, listening, attempting to accustom his ear to the voice.

But he only heard noise. Words that made no sense – sentences, with contents he couldn’t understand.

It was there again, suddenly. The tired emptiness, the miserable sensation of feeling drained. Every day now it seized him like this – for one or two hours – without any cause, like a thick fog that arose from out of every crack.

He didn’t sleep; he didn’t dream – he only heard sounds, scratching and screeching sounds, ugly and out of tune, from far away. He tried to stand up, but couldn’t do it. He remained sitting, still and unmoving.

Patient and suffering under the torment of this horrendous voice.

Then Lotte spoke and her soft cello voice broke the spell. He quickly jumped up, went up to the professor and took the manuscript out of his hand.

“It is very interesting Baron,” he cried. “Please allow me to read the rest of it a little bit later.” He didn’t wait for an answer, but went out of the room, and across to Lotte’s bedroom. There he threw himself down on the sofa and closed his eyes.

But only for a moment – he was completely awake now, all the tiredness seemed to have disappeared. He looked at the manuscript in his hands, and began to read.

Oh yes, he was interested in it. Very much so, from the very first line –

Such thorough research! Egyptian texts, then Coptic, Hebrew, Latin and Greek. Then also Geez, the language of the old Ethiopian church as well as Assyrian and Babylonian. And the history continued on further, through the Byzantine, Albanian, central Slav and Magyar languages – and again through Abyssinian, Amharic, Arabian and Negro dialects. Then it cut across diagonally through Africa as far as Dahomey – and then spread out across Europe from out of the southeast. And one thing after another flowed together so clearly and convincingly – it was a long history through the centuries – from the stars of heaven down to the bloody hellish sacrifices in New York: an astral myth, but with hands that had the power to grip even in today's world.

He could remember very clearly the slender, brown Negro priestess, whose night time sacrifice he had once attended several years ago in Haiti, in the Honfoû Temple at Petit-Goaves. She had slaughtered her own child with her own hand, and then offered its blood to the believers mixed with rum.

The professor went on to say that it was all just a myth, and under no circumstances bloody reality. It was just a dream, but one, which would become a savage reality. It was the desert fantasy of a stargazing shepherd, just a dreaming poet, but one, whose powerful creation encircled the world for centuries.

The sun set and the sun rose – all of creation could see that, all those who wandered around on the earth.

But the poet in the desert saw more, much more. He saw and he said, that the sun, so young and beautiful, just one day old, had been robbed and murdered by a cruel divinity. But the new sun, which rose on the next day, was even more radiant and bright than the other, it was the dead sun's beautiful daughter. Her child – and yet in some way still the old sun itself, which had been resurrected in renewed glory from out of the dead of the night. That was the story which the dreaming shepherd in the desert read in the stars, the ancient myth of the dismembered child.

Labartu was the Babylonian name for the Star Goddess who stole the sun child, tore it to pieces and devoured it – and she was the wife of Baal.

Yet she was none other than the Indian Kali, the fearful Durga, the strangler, the spouse of Shiva, the destroyer. She was his Sakti, his emanation, the manifestation of his thought – and the bloody hand of his brain. And just like she devoured that child of heaven, the young sun, she also claimed the children of mankind, killing them in the womb or shortly after their birth. And that was why one had to offer sacrifices to her, had to appease her so that she would mercifully pass by the house of the young mother. That was the demand of Labartu for herself and for Baal. And if that was her right in Babylon, it appeared cheap in Sydon and Tyre and Carthage where she was called Astarte and as the spouse of Moloch ruled over the children of the Phoenicians.

Her blessings depended upon the young blood of every firstborn. Only girls were demanded by the terrible Durga – they were drowned in milk to the glory of the goddess, and still are today in remote parts of India. But Astarte demanded everything – every firstborn young child, that the mother brought forth. That was her cruel right in the Orient. And they gave it to her, with humility and trembling – all folk, including Israel. Didn't every firstborn son in the Old Testament disappear – mysteriously enough? First Ishmael and Esau. But then later, David's first son by Bathsheba. And Jephthah's merry little daughter – oh –, so many –

Wasn't Isaac to be slaughtered for this same belief? But the great God of the Jews showed mercy to the victim. With the sacrifice of two doves Israel paid off the cruel right of the gods upon their firstborn – and yet Solomon and many other Jewish kings and nobles continued to sacrifice their children to the terrible Goddess. They cut their children's throats with their own hands and let the blood flow over the altar and dismembered the little bodies as Baaltis commanded.

The cult of the child killing goddess was brought to Rome – Pliny tells about it. And from Greece it spread over the entire Balkans as far as the Danube Valley – and westward from there. It reached its wildest peak in the seventeenth century when Elizabeth Bathory, the bloody countess, filled the halls of her castle with the terrible screams, the pathetic death cries of miserably whipped and cruelly slaughtered Hungarian girls.

It never slowed, but grew steadily through the entire Middle Ages right up to the present day – everywhere in Europe. It blossomed in black masses, and was not uprooted despite the churches strong battle against it with sword and fire. Didn't Herr Gille de Rais slaughter over eight hundred

children with his own hand? He, Marshall of France, the famous warrior, standard-bearer for the maid of Orleans! And the Marquis of Montespan, the mistress of Louis XIV, and by him the mother of French princes, allowed – more than once – her own body to be used as a precious altar on which the Abbé Guibourg dismembered newborn children in the chapel of the castle at Saint Denis!

She called upon the devil Astaroth – just like Baron de Rais did – who was to help her keep the king's love in the same way Astaroth was to bring gold to the Marshall. Astaroth – that's what she was called during that time.

The murderous cult found its way from Carthage into central Africa, perhaps also moving diagonally through Abyssinia. Moloch's wife Astarte was called Basileia the Queen, by the Greeks, Bersilia by the Semites, and the Coptic's called her Berzelya – which means, the goddess who kills children with her iron hands. and even today the Abyssians speak of Werzelya who steals and murders suckling infants, and who slays the unborn in the mother's womb.

From the banks of the Congo the black slaves brought the cult with them to America. And in their voodoo cult the name of the goddess priestess was the same that the Greeks had given her: Queen! Mamaloi – because the Negro could not pronounce the "R" – Mama –Roi – mother and Queen!

And she is still drinking the blood of children today: Durga –Astarte – Mamaloi, the strangler.

Even today – in the middle of New York.

He stood up; and went back into the library where professor von Kachele was speaking like before. But now about horoscopes, about the strange prophecy of Alexander for the year –

He interrupted him, and handed the manuscript back.

"Even with all of this, professor," he said, "I still don't understand, how so suddenly your horrible myth of the stars can somehow become living. You gave an overview of the entire development of this cult, tracing its entire history through all the centuries, finding all the connections, but you don't really believe, Baron, that somehow my Mamaloi in Petit-Goaves had any knowledge of this myth? You don't really believe that Marshall Gilles de Rais, the Hungarian countess or the French Marquis were somehow aware of the fact that their dismembered boys and girls were actually victims of this age old ritual? Well now professor, do you think, that these

old ideas can appear spontaneously, and in an entirely new form, in the human brain?

The professor became silent, and moved uneasily back and forth in his chair.

“I realize very well that there are gaps in my research.” he finally said. “I may even be able to fill them in – perhaps! But, you know, I don’t like to think about it – even less talk about it.”

He rubbed his finger on his nose, slowly, up and down.

“It is absurd to believe in a God and not in the Devil,” he began, “one is inconceivable without the other. The Devil is just as strong as the Lord! He appears when he wishes and where he pleases. Inside of me –” his voice sank into a faint trembling whisper, almost fearful – “he did not ask for my permission before appearing inside of me. An old woman, ugly, stinking and repulsive – that pleased him, that great Lord, when it happened to be his whim. Goethe knew about it as well – you can read about it in the second part of Faust! And I – well, you know Doctor, what happened to me!”

He pulled out an enormous handkerchief, and blew his nose with it, snorting loudly. Then he took off his glasses and cleaned them carefully, blinking out of his yellow half blind eyes.

“Do I look like a faun?” He continued. “Would anyone suspect that Satan-Phallus is hidden inside me, the goat God, who has no brain and thinks only with his penis? – And yet it pleased him to erect his Temple in these poor miserable bones of mine. This marvel, Doctor, sits before you now, very much alive and real – runs freely through the streets of New York – very pleased, that for the first time he can again do some decent work and does not have to do urine analysis for a living. I know exactly what I did Doctor – down to the last detail. But, why I did it – how this monstrous idea suddenly took hold of me – a quiet scholar, the most sober professor in Germany – that I don’t know. It was simply there, digging its claws into my brain, and would not set me free. Since then, I know what it means to be possessed. And since then nothing surprises me anymore, no dream, no whim, not the wildest thought. Everything, everything is possible in the human brain.”

Frank Braun asked:

“So you believe, professor, that –”

But the professor didn’t let him finish. “Yes, yes and yes!” He cried. “I think – and I have paid dearly for my belief, that no man can be certain of himself for even a quarter of an hour. That every human brain is a large room, in which in the next second something – a God, a devil or whatever you want to call them – can perform the most beautiful or the craziest of dances. Very pious, very sacred – and very horrible as well, common and terrible – as fate will have it. And if this beautiful and graceful lady, that sits here in front of you, if Frau van Ness should suddenly reveal herself tonight as a most savage priestess of Baaltis, if she should dismember young boys and drink their blood, I would not regard it as anything extraordinary, in light of my own experiences. I would regret it, but as a scientist I would include the interesting case in my research, simply as a new example of the ancient cult of Labartu.”

He pushed his glasses back up on his nose, stood up, and placed the manuscript on the table.

“Would you like a cigar for the road, Baron?” Asked Frank Braun.

“No, thank you,” answered the professor. “I still don’t smoke, I still don’t drink and I am still the most sober, the most uninteresting man in the world. But if what I said tonight sounds fantastic to you, just remember what brought me here to America!”

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The professor had been gone for over an hour. But the two of them still sat in their chairs in the library, smoking, and sipping at their glasses. They didn’t look at each other, and didn’t speak, remained silent.

“Would you like to have the car,” she asked, “to take you back home?”

He looked over at her, and answered.

“I would like to stay here tonight.”

She quickly stood up, lifting her fine lips.

“Oh, whatever you want. The wine is over there, serve yourself. I will get ready then – I will send the maid when I am ready for you.”

At the door she stopped, and smiled back at him.

“Tell me – what would you like to see tonight, whether I am Astarte perhaps – were to drink blood? You once called me the Phoenician. Goddess – priestess – what was it?”

He didn’t answer, but her go.

He thought:

“Anything is possible in the human brain.”

He thought back –

So what was it? – What could be possible?

A priestess dripping with blood – and he himself her sacrifice, the dismembered child.

It was so silly, so absurd, like Doctor Cohen’s theory about a South Sea disease.

And yet the suspicion remained – and he could not rid himself of it.

He emptied the last glass, and followed the maid. Went into the bathroom, took a cold shower and put on a pair of silk pajamas.

She was sitting on the large bed when he came in. Her red hair fell down loosely over her lace nightgown. She held a couple of small, glittering things in her hand, playing with them, then setting them down quickly on the nightstand, when she heard his soft footsteps. He saw what had glittered so brightly, saw that it was a small scissors and a cute little folding knife that was open.

Then she took a ring from the table and put it on her finger.

He stepped up to her.

“A new ring?” He asked. “Another charm?”

She held out her hand to him.

“Perhaps. But it is not new.”

It was an ugly ancient silver ring with a crest cut on a greenish stone and set in a cheap mounting.

“I found it yesterday in a junk shop on second Avenue.

“ she smiled, “The rogue made me pay a hundred dollars for it, when he realized that I had to have it. I just can’t bargain – it is a pity.”

“The thing isn’t worth fifty cents,” he said.

“Yes it is?” She replied. “It is worth more than that to me. Look here: a pelican, pricking open her breast to feed her thirsty young with her own blood.”

He looked at her sharply – that same thought again!

“Why does it interest you so much?” He demanded.

She shrugged her shoulders.

“Oh, it just does! It is the crest of Magdeburg – my mother’s family came from there.”

She stood up, took a tumbler from the table that was filled to the brim with a milky white liquid and offered it to him.

“Drink, my friend,” she said.

“What is it?” He asked.

“A strong sleeping potion!” She answered. “Doctor Cohen mixed it for me at my request.”

He shook his head.

“No!” He cried. “What do I need a sleeping potion for?”

She said: “Then I will drink it.”

She raised the glass and drank it to the last drop. Then she spoke: “One of us needs this – for tonight.

You, if – or I, if –”

She set the glass down, put both hands on his shoulders and smiled at him:

“You see – that’s the way it is.”

“What: if –? Lotte, what’s going on?” He cried impatiently.

She put her head against his so that her soft red curls played around his neck and chin.

“Don’t ask,” she begged.

“You know very well, that I won’t say anything if I don’t want to.”

She lifted her head, looked at him, and became very serious.

A kindness rang in the deep cello like tones of her voice.

“It is very difficult, my beloved, what I am doing – very difficult, very difficult. But I do it gladly.”

“Like my mother’s voice,” he thought.

She pulled him over to the bed.

“Come, come – seize the minutes. Just half an hour – and then I will be fast asleep. I am your thing while I am awake – and even more when I am asleep. If you only knew how much –”

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The next evening he was riding in Central Park with Ivy Jefferson.

“Why don’t you say something?” Asked the blonde. “What are you thinking about?”

He didn’t answer right away; but then she cried:

“Oh I already know very well – what you are thinking about! About Frau van Ness and nobody else! – Tell me whether I am right.”

“Yes!” He nodded. “How did you know that?”

Little Ivy laughed out loud. “How? The entire city knows it!”

And a little thoughtfully, she continued: “I saw her this summer, when she was in Newport. She is proud – and interesting – and very rich. And perhaps – also very beautiful. I can understand how she attracts men – and you!”

“Are you jealous?” He demanded.

She laughed again: “Certainly I’m jealous. But it is a game and a battle – and I like that! I have thought about it – we are equally strong, both of us. She is perhaps more clever, but I am much younger. We will see who will win!”

She rode right up to him, pushing the horses together so that their flanks touched. Her lips were close, but her nostrils flared, it was as if she was breathing in a strong perfume.

“Tell me,” she murmured, “were you with her last night?”

He looked sharply into her eyes. Quickly, almost brutally, he cried – right in her face –

“Yes, I slept with her!”

She threw back her head, and whispered: “I knew it. I felt it.”

She dug her spur into the animals left flank, striking sharply at the same time with her riding crop, twice – three times, across the flanks. And raced away.

He didn’t follow her. Rode on further at a slow pace, looking after her scornfully.

“It is you who will call – not me!” He thought.

Then he took up his thoughts again, the dreams that little Ivy had interrupted; his dreams of last night.

Kisses, kisses and embraces. He was cool and very cold, but her warm love soon melted the snow. She kissed the rich soil of his heart, made flowers bloom and grow, so many colored flowers. They dripped from his lips, rained on her, covered her, enveloped her.

Oh, he loved her, loved her – until she fell asleep in his kisses.

She kept her eyes open as long as she could. “Thank you,” she whispered – as her eyelids shut.

It was exactly half an hour – just like she had said.

He had turned out the light, and had sat next to her. Looked at her, fixedly, without moving, silent, still.

Then all the happiness had drowned – and his body was again seized with the sneaking fever of terrible emptiness. And again in his brain, the miserable suspicion – the gnawing suspicion –

Did she take the drink – to deceive him? Was she just waiting – until he was asleep – in order to –

In order to – what? What?

He had not taken his eyes off her. Had just sat there looking at her. Then he had turned the light off again, had laid back down, and had pretended that he was asleep – had struggled with his strong will against his tiredness.

Had listened. Listened. For hours.

But nothing, nothing. He had scarcely heard her breathing. Then – after some hours – he had fallen asleep.

He had awoken very late, feeling fresh – and well! And strong, stronger than he had felt for months.

But Lotte van Ness had lain there, just like she had lain there in the night, with the covers pulled up to her chin – fast asleep.

He had gotten up, bathed, dressed, ate breakfast, then had gone back to her room. She was still asleep.

He had driven back home; telephoned her a couple of hours later. But only the maid had answered: the gracious Frau was still asleep. And she had given commands yesterday, that she was not to be woken up, until she woke up herself.

He spurred his horse on, into a trot, and then into a gallop. He felt so strong, that he could've remained in the saddle for ten hours.

And he thought, that he had done her an injustice, a bitter injustice. That he must go back to her that evening. Kneel in front of her, kiss her hands, and tell her how much love he had for her –

Then suddenly something occurred to him. What had happened to the shiny scissors, and the polished sharp little knife that had been laying on the nightstand when he had entered her room? He had planned to keep an eye on them – but he had forgotten all about them. He hadn't even cast a glance at them when he had jumped up from the bed.

What had they been for? What did she want with them? What had happened to them last night?

Had she done something – while he was asleep –? But what could it have been, what?

He couldn’t find any answer.

But the suspicion seized him again, strongly and solidly, digging its claws into his brain – not leaving him alone –

Chapter Nine: Selenites

"Down to the waist they are centaurs,
Though women all above:
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiends; there is hell, there's
Darkness, there is a furious pit. Burning,
Scalding, stench, consumption –fye, fye, fye!"
Shakespeare, King Lear

"In Skodra whoever puts four Okas in water and drinks it, becomes a ruffian, whoever drinks it in Tyrana, loves the boys. – But whoever in Dradsch has a moonstone and throws it in the water along with four Okas and drinks it, is with the devils during the night as well as with the angels."
Albanian proverb,(during the time of Skanderbeg)

His secretary handed him the mail.

"There is an invitation from Miss Pierpont in there," he said. "For the festival of the Moon Ladies. – You wanted to take me there."

"Let's see it," he said, taking the envelope, tearing it open, reading it, and shaking his head.

"Oh yes, not even once can they have a real Festival in this city of parrots!" He cried. "Read this, Rossius:, '28 Januarii A. D. 1490!' It is taken word for word from the invitation of Duke Rimoff, and the shindig of the Moon Ladies will probably be a cheap imitation of that Festival which the Duke gave in Paris five or six years ago! It would scarcely be worth the effort to go."

His secretary asked: "Were you to that one, Doctor?"

"No," he replied. "But Miss Pierpont was there. She told me all about it, how glorious it had been! The abbess of San Sixto, from the Order of the holy Dominicans of Guzman, gave the feast for Caesar Borgia to celebrate his return to Rome: that is the idea. The details were taken from the diary of Burchard, the master of ceremonies for Alexander VI. It may have been all right in Paris – but here it would most certainly be terrible: Renaissance with the Piermont's in New York!"

Ernst Rossius made a long face.

“You don’t want to go, doctor? But, you thought it would be very good for me, to once go to such an – orgy to see – these – these ladies!”

He laughed: “It would be very good for you? Well? I don’t know whether it would be that good for your morals. But it would certainly be interesting for you – that’s for sure! Tell me, do I have that evening free?”

“Entirely free!” Cried the secretary. “I have already looked – no speeches, no theater – not a single invitation.”

Frank Braun said: “Well then good, let’s go. Write her a letter, saying that I thankfully accept and ask, if I may be permitted to bring you along. Just a minute, here is the list of proposed costumes: Papal guards, Spanish court costumes – French and Venetian ambassadors – here we go: Franciscan Friars – that will do! That is the simplest and arguably the most genuine as well – and we will certainly see some fancy costumes! Call up the German theater, and ask whether the director will lend us a couple of Friar’s habits that aren’t too moth-eaten!”

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They arrived a little late: the solemn reception was over and the abbess Benedicta was just escorting her illustrious guest, the nephew of the Pope, to the refectory where the entertainment was to take place. So that’s where they went. It was in a spacious hall of the enormous clubhouse, with a very large solarium right next to it. The separating glass walls had been removed for this night, so that it all seemed to be one gigantic room, which opened up into a garden.

Really, it didn’t give the impression that you were in a cloister, most certainly not – anything that had to do with religion, had been carefully avoided in the decorating of the Hall. There was no crucifix, no Virgin and no Saints, neither statues nor paintings of them. The overhead lights glowed dimly in this dark red decorated hall, and the room could have been used for anything – a rococo dance or a banquet from the Arabian nights.

“There is director Andre!” Pointed Rossius.

“Also as a monk?” Frank Braun spoke to him. “But a Dominican – that fits!”

“I am Savonarola,” laughed Andre. “I came from San Marco by way of Florence. I am here to collect material for my sermons.”

Every house in New York stood wide open for him, every house in the entire United States. They had been open to him from the time when he had been a great tenor in the Metropolitan Opera, who sang everything. Then he became director of the Opera and for years ruled the art world – and today he had three operas traveling across the country, and at the same time was involved in all kinds of things: movies, vaudeville, and the circus.

"Come gentleman," he continued, "let's go to the balcony, we can view the entire production from there."

A long balcony had been constructed on the longest wall of the hall and along the other two walls; four chairs were brought up for them. There were many easy chairs as well as regular chairs standing around, decorated in red and gold – footman pushed them into place for the guests. The abbess in pious black and white stepped up; she accompanied Caesar Borgia to her throne, which was placed exactly in the middle of the hall.

"She looks very good, Susan Pierpont!" Said Frank Braun. "But who is her handsome Caesar? He could have been a little more Spanish."

A twelve-year-old girl sat at the feet of the abbess; she was Lucretia Borgia, Caesar's pretty little sister.

The guests slowly stepped through the hall, and chairs were pulled up for them. Each guest was greeted with the fanfare of trumpets and a Herald announced their names.

Next to the abbess sat the Pope's mistress, Vanossa, Caesar's mother, a woman in her forties. Then, young Julia Farnese with her husband, the Duke of Orsini – she was Miss Pierpont's friend, Marion de Fox. The Cardinal Alexander Farnese stood behind her, and behind the abbess stood the Pope's Master of Ceremonies, Burchard. Then Adriana Mila, the Cardinal's intimate friend, Caesar's sisters, Isabella and Girolama, who was played by Miss Marlborough, the third in the Pierpont triumvirate, who were as famous in Paris as they were in New York. Then came Gioffre Borgia, Giovanni di Celano, Pier Luigi: – and all nine children of the powerful Pope Roderigo, who called himself Alexander VI. Even little Laura and Giovanni had not been forgotten, the Pope's youngest children, whom Julia Farnese had borne him. She held the little girl, while the young boy sat on the lap of Vanossa. Only he himself, the Pope, was not there – no, no, that was not acceptable, you had to make some concessions. But all of his nephews and relatives: Sancia, Don Geoffrie's spouse, the bishops Collerando and Francisco Borgia, the Finance Minister; then Luigi Pietro

Borgia, the Cardinal Deacon of Santa Maria, and Roderigo Borgia, the Captain of the Papal guard. Even the Privy Counselor Juan Marades, Bishop of Toul, was there, looking magnificent, as well as Pietro Carranza, the Privy Chamberlain, and his friend Giovanni Lopez, Bishop of Perugia. And many more.

"Remolino de Ilerdo," the Herald announced. "*Giovanni vera da Ercilla* – members of the sacred college."

Frank Braun had been mistaken – all these costumes were tasteful and genuine – Miss Pierpont had certainly put a lot of money into this. Only among the invited guests could you see some very strange interpretations of Renaissance costumes. Even the atmosphere of the entire production was authentic enough – you could see that it had been jealously rehearsed.

Everyone took their places on the balconies, which were now tightly packed. Only the wide space in the middle that led into the garden remained free, through which Papal guards and serving Friars marched, and who soon lost themselves in the greenery.

Then an organ began to play, somewhere, in the back. The light became dim, and shimmered almost blue like moonlight. And a soft singing ran through the stillness. The voices of women, the soft voices of women.

Frank Braun closed his eyes. Listened. Thought back. When had he last heard this song? It must have been long long ago. It had been in Latin – the singing of nun's voices.

Ah yes – once – with the rose nuns – on Johannes night, Midsummer's Eve –

How had it been?

And he drifted back through the years – dreamed of the chanting of nuns – and he saw himself again, as he had been at that time.

* *
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Then – then –

He was an attorney down on the lower Rhine. The District Court judge didn't like him from the first day on, and even less with every week and every month that passed.

That was why he hated the District Court judge, like he hated everyone that couldn't tolerate him. Today he smiled about it. Most certainly the

District Court judge was right. Why had he become an attorney? The District Court judge didn't give him much work, but naturally it was only the most unpleasant and most boring. But it was only a little bit of work, God –three or four hours a day, and then going along to the tavern in the evening, so he could play.

Also, he had to be Clerk of Court one morning a week, and play skat one evening a week. That was cheap, that was fair, but what did that have to do with legal training? So he didn't play skat. He did go to the tavern, but just once and didn't go again. He declared that it bored him.

–Boring? To him, to an attorney? –He didn't go visiting either. Not with the mayor, the governor, the counselor of the consistory or the director of the university.

The District Court judge talked to him, and he told the judge that he had seen the gentlemen in the tavern, a closer association wasn't needed. Once and only once he was Clerk of Court at a hearing. When he placed the document down in front of the District Court judge to sign, the judge became red, then pale and then red again.

And he asked:

"Herr, what is this?"

He answered, "My notes."

The District Court judge slammed the document down onto the table. Oh, he would have gladly torn it up if he could have, but the notes had to be written into the minutes of the hearing, they had to be. So he coughed and painfully signed it.

Then he said, and his face once more became pale, very pale, "In my twenty years –twenty years of practice as a Prussian Judge such sloppy work has never come before me."

The attorney thought a bit, "I think it's pretty bad as well."

The District Court judge stared at him, searched for something that would offend him. Finally he snarled, "Herr! –Herr! Go to a school teacher and learn how to write better!"

He replied, "Thanks, but it's not worth the effort."

He was useless. He always came to court an hour too late, skipped whenever he could. He forgot everything, was unreliable and awkward. He was impossible, entirely impossible and it was really for the best when he stayed away entirely.

The District Court judge was beside himself.

“Hopeless,” he growled, “Completely hopeless.”

But one time the judge had his revenge. He called him in, gave him a beautiful speech, cheerfully, almost fatherly. He wanted to have a calm talk with him –*sine ira et studio!* (without anger and forethought) What was he really thinking? Where was all this going to lead?

Then he said, “I don’t think its going anywhere at all. It’s all very boring to me.”

Then the District Court judge took pity on him, gave him a good talking to, and reproached him for all his crimes, placing them beautifully in the light. It was a fine dressing down and ironing.

Then he said scornfully, “Dear God, Herr District Court Justice, report it to the president of the Supreme Court! Write it down in my list of moral and professional qualities!”

That was it, the District Court judge blew up.

“Herr,” he said. “Herr, who do you think I am? Do you think I’ve ruined your career? Me? You are getting the same beautiful “F” grade that you have received a hundred times! Do whatever you want! –Thank you! –You can go!”

It was a smooth and all around victory. That was why he hated the District Court judge.

– Except for the fat priest he had no friends down there. He went to visit him to play chess.

The priest was a connoisseur of wine and loved it. He only drank Mosel, like all good Rhinelander’s. Or else, here and there, a glass from the Saar or Ruwer. He enjoyed developing his young friend’s taste in wines.

“Year?” He asked.

“Ninety-three!” Said the attorney, and the priest nodded. So he learned how to drink wine and how to play chess. He understood, that both were half skill and half science. And he thought, that it was most certainly, the best thing that he could do with his time in this little city on the lower Rhine.

The months crawled by –

“Did you see the abbess?” The priest was always asking. Then Frank Braun would shake his head – but he would always declare again, that he would most certainly go visit the Dominicans in the next few days. He had

promised it to his mother and to the priest as well. He never forgot, but he kept putting it off – it never happened. And the priest scolded him.

Once the priest said: “I was at the cloister. The abbess wants me to tell you, that you have very bad manners.”

He turned red. “God knows, that she is right! Tomorrow I will go there!” He declared.

And the priest replied: “Good, that you will go see her! But you don’t need to go tomorrow – the abbess has invited you to Sunday night.”

“Night?” He asked in amazement.

The priest nodded: “Yes, at night! Around 10 o’clock we will go there – that’s when the moon comes up – then the nuns will begin their Feast of Roses.”

– They drove there through the July night, in the old buggy of the priest. He himself held the reins and lines.

“Pull, Zoefke, pull!” He cried to the old mare. And the old horse whinnied.

“For eight years now I have been going there on this night,” said the priest. “Since the time sister Beata became abbess. Since then the Feast of Roses has blossomed.”

The attorney asked: “Since then? Then she started it?”

“No,” replied the priest, “It is ancient. As old as the cloister itself, or just a little younger. The first abbess, Klara von Pappenheim, was supposed to have established the feast, in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Only, you know, Doctor, it is no longer considered proper – at least that is what many priests think. They don’t forbid the nuns from having it, but they rant and rave – and so one old custom after another disappears. Until finally only the name remains: Feast of Roses. – But our abbess has brought it back again.”

“What did she do?” He asked.

The priest explained: “She brought all the old customs back again – as they were described in the Chronicles of the cloister. Only a few that were too crude she left out. Oh, you will see, what it is like. The people in Cologne are very much against her; they fear, that this drinking feast will annoy the pious and bring ridicule from the heathen. Only – the abbess is a Droste, from the lineage of Vischering, you know, and three of her kin were abbess’ of this cloister. And her uncle is the Archbishop of Mainz, and one of her brothers is the Prince-Abbot of Trittheim. So they don’t do anything

against her. As long as she lives, the roses will blossom here every year on Midsummer's Eve, St. John's night."

They arrived at the cloister at 10 o'clock; the deaf gardener opened the gate for them. They walked through the spacious garden, over a beautiful white gravel path that was bathed in the moonlight. The priest pointed out a tall cedar tree to Frank Braun; it's black silhouette towered among the silver brilliance.

"From Lebanon!" He said. "They say, that a nun brought it back as a little seedling, a young nun, who had joined the children's crusade of Peter of Amein and then returned as an ancient Frau. But that's not true. A Droste brought the seedling from Lebanon, just a hundred and fifty years ago; he was a cousin of the third abbess of his family."

The gardener led them into the frontcourt, then into the main courtyard of the cloister, where he told them to wait.

"The nuns will be coming soon," he said, "as soon as the Mass has ended."

Frank Braun looked around him. Only a few lamps were lit in the cloister; but the moonlight fell radiantly into the courtyard. The smooth floor was covered with large, white marble slabs; and everywhere on the columns and growing high into the galleries crawled rose bushes. White roses, many thousands of white roses.

"These are all Niphetos and Boule de Neige," the priest explained. Only those three bushes there in front are Francisca Krüger which I planted myself twelve years ago."

In the cloister-garth two long tables had been set with white damask, and in front of each chair was set a plate and a finely cut goblet. Silver baskets stood there, filled with candy, but everywhere on the table, strewn over the tablecloth and spilling out of tall crystal vases, were roses, white roses. Among the roses stood carafes of Venetian glass, narrow throated and full-bodied. But they were empty.

"Soon they will glow with heavy cypress wine," declared the priest. He waved at a rosebush. "There – do you see it."

Covered with roses and resting in a wooden frame was a good sized barrel. And next to it a smaller one, resting comfortably.

"The little one is mine," he laughed. "Bernkasteler Auslese, from the high school at Trier. I sent it here – I don't care for cypress wine. The women drink that. Your Herr uncle sends it, every year from Rome."

“Who?” Asked the attorney. “My uncle?”

“Really!” Cried the old man. “Your uncle! The Jesuit. The Monsignore. – Don’t you know the story?”

Oh yes, his mother had told the story to him. Of his uncle, who had been a Hussar captain. Who had then, after the war of eighteen seventy, left the service, gone back to Rome, became Catholic and a priest. It must have had something to do with the abbess, and that was why he was supposed to go to her. But he had scarcely been listening at the time and had long since forgotten about it.

“It would be better, that you know the story, before you see the abbess,” said the priest. “Come with me.”

At the foot of the cloister stood a small table; three chairs, three plates, and three glasses. Another basket of candy and a large bush of roses.

“This is where we sit,” he continued, “you, I and the Deacon, who is now holding the Mass. Sit down.”

He took two glasses, went to the wine barrel and filled them.

“Drink, Doctor – this is the night, that the roses bloom.”

The light ringing of the glasses mixed with the sounds of the nightingale, which sang from out of the roses. And, very softly, very softly, far away in the Chapel, sounded the singing of the nuns.

“*Stabat Mater speciosa!*” Said the priest. “I brought the song to the abbess, myself! She lets it be sung, just once during the year – on the night of St. John, Midsummer’s Eve. I told her about Jacopone of Todi –”

That was the first time the attorney had heard about the “Speciosa” and the man fromTodi.

The priest emptied his glass.

“Now they are finished,” he said. “So listen!”

He began the little story of the abbess, and immediately, at the first few sentences, the attorney remembered once more what his mother had told him back then. But he didn’t interrupt. He listened, dreaming among the roses.

His uncle – yes, his uncle had a friend and comrade, a Lieutenant like himself in the same regiment. And his friend had become engaged to Lenore Droste – at the time she was eighteen years old. She was very young and very beautiful; and she gave her hand to her young playmate, who’s father’s estate stood next door to the ancestral seat of her family. He loved her – and she really liked him – but she didn’t know yet, what love was. Not

then. But she knew it three months later when she met the other man, her fiancé's friend – his uncle.

They both knew that they loved each other, yet they never spoke of it. Then the war came, and the Hussars went to the front. She said goodbye to her fiancé and wept as he kissed her. But an hour later his uncle came. She didn't want to – not at all – and yet she lay in the arms of his uncle – and they kissed each other passionately, passionately, once, to last for a lifetime –.

Her fiancé was killed shortly afterwards at Spichern. But his uncle came back, as a captain, decorated with the iron cross – a laughing hero.

Only: the woman he loved was gone. She had taken the veil with the Dominicans, did penance for that one kiss, the kiss that had betrayed her fiancé. She was a Droste. Her kiss had betrayed the love of her fiancé – and her betrayal had further sharpened the bayonet that had pushed him from his horse. – Wasn't that really what had happened? – And nothing else?

Lenore Droste believed it and he did too – she never saw him again. First he took leave, and traveled to Italy. Then he retired from the Army, converted to the Catholic faith, and became a priest – like her.

Out of passionate conviction – most certainly. And yet also: was there any greater way of showing his love for this woman?

They both rose in their profession. He became Monsignor and she became Abbess Beata. They never wrote each other, never, but they heard about each other. And for many years now, he sent cypress wine for the Feast of Roses.

That was the story.

The deacon stepped out of the vestry door, and came over to join them in the cloister. He was a man in his sixties, tall, and powerful, with full, white hair and clever eyes. The priest greeted him and introduced his young friend to him.

"Is the abbess coming?" He asked.

"They will be right here," answered the deacon. And he emptied a glass to the priest's health.

Again the organ started to play, and the doors to the Chapel opened. The nuns slowly stepped into the cloister two by two, each one carried a branch, and on every branch gleamed three roses.

Not white – they were red, dark red roses.

"The wounds of Christ," said the priest.

“And at the same time the Trinity,” declared the Deacon. “Three: Father and Son and Holy Ghost – and yet only one: one God.”

Softly singing the nuns passed under the columns of the cloister, and out into the moonlight flooded cloister garth. And across the white veil of roses drifted the sweet pearls of Palestrina’s unearthly song:

Jesu! Dulcis memoria,

Dans vera cordi gaudia
Sed super mel et omnia,
Ejus dulcis praesentia!

Sic, Jesu, nostrum gaudium –

Such sweet words. Such sweet sounds. The nuns came through the four arches out into the cloister courtyard, walked around the large tables, and remained standing in front of their chairs. Last came the abbess; preceded by an old lay sister who adjusted the cushions on her throne. The abbess climbed up the little step and sat down, signaling the nuns with her branch to take their places at the table.

Frank Braun stared over at her. She was beautiful, this abbess, with a calm, austere beauty. How old could she be?

He calculated, forty – or no, just thirty-seven, maybe thirty-eight. And twenty Years in the cloister –

The old lay sister served their small table. She filled their glasses with Mosel wine. But four young nuns took the shiny carafes, filled them with dark wine and poured for the rest of the sisters. Then, at a signal from the abbess, they all stood up and prayed. It was a short prayer, and prayed in silence.

Silently the abbess lifted her glass and silently she emptied it. And all the others did like she did.

Abbess Beata waved with the rose twig, and one of the young nuns rose from the table and stepped into the center of the cloister garth.

“Now comes the old story of the miraculous love of Jesus, of the love that never ends,” said the priest. “They say that the first Droste wrote it. For centuries it was spoken in Latin, but our abbess has translated it into German. Sister Agnes is going to recite it.”

The young nun began, half speaking, half singing, chanting. She told of the love of Jesus, that was so much greater, much deeper, than the human brain could comprehend. And even if a soul were weighed down with the greatest sin, it could be saved if the sinner repented and came to Lord Jesus. – – For seven years the knight Tannhäuser had been in Hörselberg with Frau Venus, the evil she devil, enmeshed in a net of blackest sin. Then he escaped, and went back to Rome, in order to do penance. He kneeled down in front of Pope Urban and kissed the tips of his fingers. He confessed

everything that he had done, and prayed for absolution. But the holy father was angry over such enormous wickedness, and said, that he could not grant him absolution, and that he must burn in the deepest hell. There was no salvation for him, none – he was damned for all eternity. The Pope pushed his crooked staff into the ground and said, when this old stick bears fresh leaves, then there would be hope for the Knight – and only then.

The entire choir of nuns sang the Pope's cruel answer:

"Not until life rises in this wood –
Until a rose blossoms from this crooked staff
Not until then!"

Then the knight Tannhäuser fell to his knees a second time, kissing the holy father's feet, sobbing, pleading and begging. But the Pope grew even more angry, remained firm and repeated his 'No'!

Not until the entire world turns upside down,
And man travels downward from the earth to the heavens –
Not until then!"

And for the third time the knight threw himself to the floor, kissing the dust in front of the shoes of the Pope, mourning and weeping piteously. But the holy father persisted in his righteous rage, chasing him away from the holy place, which he dirtied with his presence, back to where he had come from and to where he belonged – to the she devil Venus in Hörselberg. Tannhäuser could never obtain absolution from his sentence, never!

Not until winter comes at summertime,
Until it rains wine and snows roses –
Not until then!"

At that the knight rose from the floor, took up his pilgrim's staff and left. And everyone in the large hall drew back from him, from this poor soul for whom there was no salvation from the eternal fire.

But in the night a beautiful youth appeared to the holy father in a dream, and he stepped up to him and spoke: "Take your staff and follow me." And he disappeared into the garden.

Pope Urban woke up, and it was already bright morning. While he was being dressed, he thought about his dream and commanded that they bring him his crooked staff, so that he could wander in his garden. They brought him the staff and the holy father took it and walked down the steps. He turned through the garden and came to fig trees, that hung full of ripe fruit. Then the Pope felt a great desire to eat figs. He pushed his staff into the earth, and went around the trees, breaking off the most beautiful fruit and eating them.

Here the nun interrupted herself. The lay sister stepped up to her, and handed her an old stick in the form of a crooked staff. Then she took it and pushed it down onto the marble floor, as if she wanted to push it into the ground – the old woman held it tightly. Then Sister Agnes went around the cloister, doing, as if she was breaking fruit from the trees and eating them. While she was doing this the other nuns congregated around the old woman who held the staff. Then Sister Agnes returned, searching for her staff.

She remained standing, reciting further.

– And Pope Urban came back to the place, where he had pushed his staff into the earth, and couldn't find it. It had disappeared: and in its place stood a rosebush – that had grown exactly in the shape of his crooked staff. It bore only a few, very young leaves and three little rosebuds.

The nuns opened the circle – there Sister Agnes found her staff again – which was decorated with rose garlands and three rosebuds.

– And the holy father walked further through his garden. It seemed to him, in the shimmer of the bright sunlight as if a youth was walking in front of him, whom he followed. Then he came to a small, round pond; stepped right up to it, and looked down into it. The pine trees reflected themselves in the clear water and grew deep down, and even further down at the bottom in the deepest spot glowed the blue heaven and the soft white clouds passing across –

Here Sister Agnes interrupted her recital for one more time. She stepped up to the pool in the corner of the cloister garth, followed by the nuns.

"Come," said the Deacon, "this is very beautiful."

And they joined the nuns at the water.

One carried a small cardboard box, which she opened slowly and very carefully.

“I provided the actor for this!” Whispered the priest to the attorney. “One of my confirmants catches one for me every year. Earlier it lived in a cigarette box for a couple of days, until it was ready for the feast, but the nuns thought that was cruel – they thought that perhaps it did not like the smell. Now I put it into a soapbox – apparently it prefers that odor.”

The nun took a small frog out of the box – and then set it in the palm of Sister Agnes hand. It was a charming, little frog, that glittered golden green in the moonlight. And it’s clever eyes peered around in wonder at the world.

The white hand of Sister Agnes trembled a little.

“He is very cold!” She said.

But she immediately took up her role again, reciting. “– The holy father sat at the edge of the water – then a little frog jumped into his open hand –”

“He’s going to bolt!” Cried a loud voice. And all the nuns giggled.

“She is from Vienna,” declared the priest, “she is a Metternich.”

The little green frog didn’t wait for his cue. He jumped down, splash, into the water.

And, with ahs and ohs – everyone pressed closer, bending their heads down to see.

Frank Braun saw the little frog, how it jumped and dived. How it swam, with quick kicks, down from the grass that hung over the edge, past the columns with rose garlands that were reflected in the water. To the moon and to all the stars and down into the the radiant heavens – from the earth down to them.

Everyone’s interest was centered in the frog and no one paid attention to the nun’s recital. For the little frog did, just what the holy father’s had done – only it swam through the brilliant sunlight. And disappeared somewhere, deep into the water – down below, into the heavens.

“I see him!” Giggled the Metternich. “Look, he sitting over there!”

The nuns went back again and took their places in a circle around Sister Agnes. She told, how Pope Urban had fallen very thoughtful and very serious. How he gave command for a hundred messengers to be sent out; that they should ride around, spy and search for the knight Tannhäuser and bring him back to the castle of angels. And he sat on his high chair and didn’t eat, didn’t drink and didn’t speak a single word. Deeply lost in thought and waiting.

But that night, which was Midsummer Eve, he had promised the Dominicans to be their guest. It was the first time that he had gone there, to celebrate with them a Feast of Roses in honor of the Lord Jesus. But as he entered into the courtyard of their cloister, it snowed little white roses over him and rained clear wine, and he heard the pious sisters chanting:

"The Lord's love does wonders all the time,
Causes snow to fall in the middle of summer.
Lord Jesus transformed rain into golden wine
And caused it to snow roses from heaven!"

– Sister Agnes didn't speak these verses, all the nuns sang them. But above on the gallery suddenly stood twelve nuns and more. Some had cups, in which they dipped their fingers and sprinkled wine on them – like golden drops of rain. And others threw roses, many, many, white roses, that snowed down from all sides onto the loudly singing sisters.

Then they became silent; Sister Agnes ended her recital. But she didn't say what had happened to the poor knight. She only said, that the Pope had knelt down with the women and sung praises to the Lord Jesus. And her recital ended with a triumphant song of praise to the heart of Jesus whose love encompassed all creatures and was much, much deeper than human thought could imagine.

The abbess beckoned Sister Agnes, who stepped forward and bowed before her throne. The abbess said a few kind words to her and patted her cheek; then dismissed her. And all the nuns sat down at the table, sipping the wine, nibbling at the candy. There was whispering, chuckling, chattering and soft laughter in the courtyard, like in a girl's school, during recess.

Again the abbess arose. She spoke: "Let us sing, sisters."

Four nuns stepped up, an old nun, tall and strong, two younger ones and a little novice. They stood under the porticus, which was wildly overgrown with roses. The tall one kept the beat with her rose branch; and the four voices sang.

"Let us sing and be happy,
In the roses,
Be with Jesus and his friends.
Who knows, how long we will be here,

In the roses?”

And everyone took it up and it rang brightly in the moonlit night:

“in – the – roses!”

The tall one is a Dalwigk,” whispered the Deacon, “and the one on the right, the one with the stubby nose, is a Romberg.”

“Jesus pours out the wine,
In the roses,
There we shall all gather,
And our hearts will fill with joy
In the roses.

He shall give us cypress wine,
In the roses,

We shall all become drunk
From the sweet love he gives,
In the roses.”

She became silent and the abbess stood up.

“Dear sisters,” she spoke, “drink to the love of the bridegroom.”

She drank her glass down to the last drop, and they all followed her.

“Pour another!” She cried. “Of the cypress wine!”

Sister Klara, the nun from Dalwigk, raised her rose branch, and gave the command, at which the novice began to sing alone. She was almost still a child, so young, tender and slender. Her voice rang like flowing moonlight, like a rain in May, like white rose petals, which Columbine threw into the wind –

“Set the glasses to your lips,
In the roses,
And drink it down to the bottom,
There you will find the Holy Ghost standing
In the roses.”

“Tee – tee – taa – Taa!” It echoed in the colonnades, and the nightingale took up the notes and fluted “too– tü –tüü –tü!”

The abbess beckoned her: “Answer!” And the sweet novice sang, louder and fuller:

“In – the – roses – –” and louder and fuller came back the Nightingale’s answer:

“too– tü –tüü –tü!”

Once more, sharp and clear like hoofs on polished marble slabs, and again, almost dying, painful and mournful, like a farewell to life.

And always the nightingale answered.

The nuns sobbed. And two large tears fell from the eyes of the priest.

“That is beautiful,” he said, “so beautiful!”

But the Deacon whispered:

“Yes. And very – heathen.”

Yet there was also a moist shimmer in his eyes.

The abbess stood up. She said:

“He is in our midst – Jesus, the God of love.”
And she took her glass, stood up and sang with the sisters:

“In – the – roses.”

They touched their glasses together and drank. And all the nuns sang the last verse:

Let the glasses be filled
In the roses!
So our homeward journey might be happy
And we might stand for eternity with our friends
In the roses!"

The Deacon stood up as well as the priest and the attorney. And they sang with the sisters:

"In – the – roses."

The old lay sister filled their glasses, and at the long table out in the cloister garth, the little novice and young Sister Ursula ran busily around, pouring from the carafes and filling the glasses. And everyone drank and sang.

The abbess beckoned the priest to her table and welcomed him.

"Tell them about the nightingale, father," she smiled, "when you make your report to Cologne."

"I shall certainly do that!" The priest smiled.

He called the attorney over and introduced him to the abbess.

She said:

"So this is him – him."

She asked about his mother and about other relatives. She didn't ask about his uncle.

He answered; his lips spoke. But he couldn't think, all his emotions pressed into his eyes. He only looked, looked –

There she sat, on her throne, this tall, beautiful Frau. Kind, saintly and serious – dead to all life. He could only see her hand, and the round oval of her face. Everything else was covered by the severe folds of her black and white nun' s habit. Behind her rose a high curtain of white roses, but red roses lay on her lap – with which her hands played. Those saintly hands, small, sweet, a little plump.

And those shining, blue eyes –

She had a glass filled with cypress wine for him, and drank with him.

Then he knelt, with both knees on the step of her throne, right in front of her. Something drew him there, forcing him to kneel.

He thought:

“Now I must ask for her blessing.”

But he didn’t speak a single word.

The abbess raised her hands, and lightly touched his temples, only with her fingertips. She gazed at him in silence. For what seemed to him an eternity.

“So like him,” she murmured, “just like him.”

She lifted his head – and at the same time bent forward. She kissed his forehead and kissed both of his eyes – she kissed him three times.

Then, oh so very lightly, she pushed him back. Jumped up, and held out her rose branch to him.

“Go!” She said. “Go!”

He took the branch with the blood red roses and got to his feet, stumbling as he drew back a couple of steps.

He stood with the priest and the Deacon. They spoke softly and quickly, but he couldn’t hear what they were saying. He just kept staring across at the most beautiful Frau –

Wasn’t she the mother of God who had kissed him?

The abbess climbed down from her throne, and stepped quickly through the porticus. All the nuns followed her.

There was silence in the spacious cloister. Only the moon shone on the marble slabs, only the moon, and everywhere, shone a white ocean of roses. – In the moonlight –

“Is the feast over?” He whispered.

The priest said:

“Normally it would not be. But tonight – it is completely finished.”

He took his left arm; the Deacon took his right. Together they led him out through the cloister. At the last columns he stopped.

“Just one minute –” he begged. “Just another second –”

He looked back. Roses, roses, white roses and moonlight. One glass had been tipped over – and Cypress wine flowed from it over the glowing marble. The wine flowed like black blood. And the nightingale sobbed.

He grasped the hand of the Deacon.

“Your Reverence,” he whispered, “tell me. Just a word – just say something! I must hear your voice. I must know, if everything that happened – is real!”

“Yes, yes –” said the Deacon. “It is reality! Come, my young friend!”

They went through the cloister garden, and stepped through the little gate. They climbed into the buggy and drove cross-country. First through the birch forest and then over the wooden bridge to Angerbach – where they brought the Deacon back home.

Frank Braun didn't see anything, didn't hear anything – he dreamed about the cloister, from which the nuns had fled, the glowing courtyard with all the moonlit roses.

"The Deacon is right," said the priest. "That was the last Feast of Roses of the Rhinish nuns."

"Why?" He asked. "Why?"

The priest slowly shook his head.

"It was a sin that time, when Baroness Lenore Droste kissed the friend of her fiancé – and she repented her sins and took the veil. She repented her sins through twenty years, until –"

"Until –?" He pressed. "Priest – until what?"

"Until tonight, when between the wine and roses, the Abbess Beata kissed the nephew of her friend – or even possibly, kissed her friend again. Himself. As she desired. That was an even worse sin."

He whispered:

"It was a sin? – A sin?"

The priest said:

"Not for you – and not even for me! Perhaps not even for the Deacon, who is even more strict. But for the abbess herself it will seem to be a large sin. With a kiss she betrayed the fiancé of her life – and now tonight, she betrayed the bridegroom of her soul – Jesus, her Savior – she betrayed again with a kiss. Tonight! – That is certainly the last Feast of Roses – the people in Cologne will be well pleased!"

"What should I do?" He asked.

His voice trembled, the priest patted his cheek.

"You?" He spoke. "There is nothing you can do! – Sleep well and pray for the saintly Frau!"

He didn't dream that night. He slept soundly. – But the next morning he went to the priest.

"I can still help her," he said. "I will do, what my uncle did. I will become Catholic."

The priest looked at him. He didn't speak a word, but his kind eyes glowed. Slowly he nodded, and held out his hand.

“I will become Catholic,” repeated Frank Braun. – But then he forgot all about it.

* *
*

Forgot all about it – like he had forgotten the Feast of Roses, and the kind priest – and the abbess. Life was so rich. – He had not thought about them until today, when the old song had lifted the veil from the past.

The organ was playing softly and from the garden came the sweet strain of far-off voices, to distant to be understood, bringing only the melody into the great Hall –

And then a full throated voice took up the old song, wandering through the garden it rang out, sweet, powerful, like the fervent faith of love –

There’s only one woman in the whole world who can sing like that,” said Andre.

And it rang out:

“Jesu! Dulcis memoria,
Dans vera cordi gaudia –

Rossius nodded:

“My God – that woman has a voice!”

Slowly, two by two, forty Dominicans came from out of the garden, with rosaries in their hands. Their lips moved, as if they were silently praying. They walked around past the balconies, curtsied low as they passed the throne of the abbess – then went on piously as they took their places out in the middle of the hall.

And only Farstin’s soulful voice alone rang through the spacious hall.

“I am curious how much she earns!” Whispered Andre. “She would not make this kind of magic for less than three thousand, that’s for sure!”

Then the most beautiful of voices fell silent and and all the guests applauded, as if they were in the Opera. But the abbess, Susan Pierpont, stood up, and waved with her hand so that they understood, that the piece was still not over, and put their hands back in their laps.

Once more the nuns’ choir took up the song, but now loud and full, a chorus of forty women.

“Now you are going to experience something, Doctor,” laughed Andre. “These are my chorus girls whom I loaned to Miss Pierpont – my conductor has rehearsed with them for two weeks and become half crazy from the noise.”

They began:

“Nil cantitur suavius,
Nil auditur jucundius,
Nil cogitatur dulcius,
Quam Jesus Dei Filius!”

But the chorus girls dressed in black and white pronounced the words as if they were English. They sang:

“Neil kenteitör sjuäveiös, neil odeitör dschököndeiös, Neil kodscheitetör dölceiös, quäm dschisös diei feileiös!”

They jazzed it up; making it sound like ragtime – a horrible Latin ragtime screeched out at the top of their lungs by worn out chorus girls!

“Is that an arrangement of your conductor?” Asked Frank Braun.

“No, no,” laughed the director, “He fought against it tooth and nail. But Susan Pierpont wanted it, she thought, that it would bring a little life into the thing and would be a very good prelude to the burlesque part of the show.”

Don Cesar made a painful grimace at the awful noise, but the abbess and her guests enjoyed it immensely. She was the first to applaud – and then the rest were permitted to applaud, now, now that the number was completely over.

“Why didn’t the girls dance to it?” Asked Rossius. “They could just as well have – just as well!”

“Because they are nuns –” replied Andre, “and because we are in America. It is still okay to sing to Ragtime – but dance to it? That might make the good Lord seriously angry.”

The nuns left stage, and buffoons tumbled into the hall. Pulcinello, Arlequino and Pantalone, Fracassa, Colombina and Isabella. Brighella, Scarannuccio and Santorello. In this act, you could see how much trouble the director had been tormented with, trying to bring a little style into these

honest people. But it would have been easier to train old bulldogs Italian buffoonery than train these people. It was a miserable waving of arms, and lunatic gestures, out of which no one could make any sense.

“How do you like little Columbine?” Asked the director. “A fine girl, that one! She is little Davies from the Knickerbocker Theatre, the young favorite of Susan Pierpont.”

Naturally they applauded as the buffoons left the stage. Footmen ran around with large platters, handing out pastries and ice cream, pouring lemonade and ice water. In addition every guest received a silk bag filled with candy.

“Isn’t there any wine?” Asked Rossius visibly disgusted.

“You are in New York, young man!” Andre reminded him. “Don’t forget that. – Go over to one of the bars – that one over there by the solarium is the closest – there you can get as much champagne, wine and whiskey, as you can drink!”

A horde of women rushed onto the stage, dancing and jumping in a dance, that was supposed to be bacchantic. They had naked legs, arms and shoulders; their bodies were wrapped in thin veils of all colors, which were lightly fastened over their shoulders and around their waists.

“Those are the nuns again”, declared the director – “in the meantime they have turned into courtesians – that’s how it is in life.”

The abbess stood up, opened her silk bag, and threw down candy to them. And everyone followed her example. Then the girls threw themselves onto the floor, rolling around, grabbing as much candy as quickly as they could. Some folded their garments into aprons, collecting the candy in them, and acting as if they would like to take the candy away from the others. The Herald blew the horn – at which they stopped. The Master of Ceremonies climbed down from the balcony; he was the prize judge. Footmen counted the candy; a skinny girl with long scrawny legs was announced the winner with a total of one hundred and thirty-seven pieces of candy. She received a diamond studded bracelet from the abbess as the first prize.

Then the girls lined up in a row at the back of the hall; while the wrestlers marched in to the strains of the Gladiator’s March.

“Do you know them?” Grinned Herr Andre. “Fritz Rachman’s wrestlers from the Manhattan House! Now, Rossius, you worked out with them last summer, who is the stocky one over there, the one without a neck?”

The secretary rattled them off:

“Pierrard le Colosse! – Next to him stands Wladek Zbysko from Crakow, then Aberg and Lurich. Luigi Mazzantini, whose real name is Müller, and was chef on the Crown Princess. Albert Fürst, the pride of Hernals, ordinarily a waiter in the hotel Plaza, Linoff, the Cossack, Hevonpää, the star of Finland –”

“Thank you, thank you!” Said Andre. “Your knowledge of sports is astounding.”

The men were not wearing tights, only narrow loincloths. The footmen dragged in twelve large mats, and laid them here and there on the floor. Then the herald stepped up to the athletes, and had them pull lots from out of a helmet, announcing out loud, which wrestler would battle against another.

And the battles began, twelve matches at the same times, at their mats, falling on top of each other. It was only for show, full Nelson’s, and chokes. Catch as catch can here, right next to Greco-Roman, even mixed, whatever they wanted. It was a circus and tame enough for the connoisseur – but who in this audience knew anything about it? Naked flesh and strong muscles for the women to feast their eyes on – that was the idea! The Cossack Linoff savagely bared his teeth when his opponent freed himself from his long apelike arms, and the Finn Hevonpää played the wild savage. He shouted and bellowed, racing around like a berserker, balling his fists at the audience – that was his game, that was what he was paid for.

Burchard, Master of Ceremonies, acted as referee, and the wrestlers made his job easy enough. Whenever he stepped up to a mat, one of them fell, and remained with both shoulders on the floor as if they had been pinned.

“Winner – Lindstrom, the Swedish giant,” he announced. “Winner – Winnetou, the Comanche chief.”

“His name is Huber and he works for a butcher,” Rossius laughed.

“Winner – Sam Einstein, the hope of the Eastside,” cried the Master of Ceremonies. And again: “Winner – Pierrard le Colosse!”

He led the twelve victors around the room, and then over across to where the courtesans were standing – they were the prizes for the heroes in this battle of love: each hero would pick one. This comedy was much more difficult for the strongmen than any wrestling match. There were supposed to act savagely fierce, grab the girls, throw them over their shoulders and

carry them away. And the courtesans were supposed to cast greedy eyes at the strongmen and look enticingly at them, but then be afraid at so much power and brutal force; were supposed to scream and cry and beat with their fists. But the chorus girls didn't look at all inviting and the naked wrestlers acted like embarrassed schoolboys at their first dancing lesson. The Comanche chief Huber clicked his heels and stood at attention before his girl as if he were asking the wife of his sergeant major for a dance at the Emperor's birthday ball. The pride of Hernals gallantly offered an arm to his lady, and Pierrard le Colosse – who weighed 300 pounds and had a round head as bald as a billiard ball – stood there completely helpless and didn't move. Only Hevonpää, the raging Finn, acted his role well. His tongue hung out, and he made grunting noises and threw bull like eyes from one to the other, as if he wanted to have all of them at the same time. Then he suddenly rushed at Jim Hawkins, The Black Pearl, who had just taken a scrawny pale looking thing by the hand, and tore the girl away from the Negro with a wild roar, lifted her up and carried her on his shoulder through the hall. The chorus girls really became fearful, crying for help and trembling – and the abbess and all her guests laughed and applauded.

The victors left the stage with their selections, but immediately let them go, and stepped to the right back into the garden, while the chorus girls went to the left.

"Now my girls are done," said Andre, "They can get dressed and go back home. They each receive a hundred dollars for the evening and are paid ten for every practice – that's a good business!"

"And the wrestlers?" Asked Rossius.

"I don't know," said the director "presumably much more. By the way, their real job is just beginning; they are to remain here, receive enough to eat and even more to drink. Then, when they are properly soaked, they will be let loose – or more like it the Moon Ladies will be let loose, and those fellows are their prey! But I believe the ladies will be bitterly disappointed: almost every athlete fails in points of love!"

With a flourish of trumpets, the Herald announced the end of the entertainment – the abbess stood up and walked down the steps with Caesar. The orchestra started to play and people began to dance. "Hesitation" naturally – in Renaissance costumes!

The three went over to the nearest bar by the solarium, where the ladies and gentlemen crowded tightly together. Everyone poured down their

drinks, quickly one after another, cocktails, champagne, whiskey, whatever the footman handed to them.

Frank Braun felt a hand on his shoulder and turned around.

“Aimée Breitauer?” He cried. “What are you doing here?”

“What am I doing here?” She laughed. “I am an American as well as anyone else here – am a member of the club!” She grabbed his arm. “Have you been through the solarium yet, doctor? Come, I will show you.”

“I was going to drink a glass of wine –”

“As much as you like,” she cried. “We have many secluded spots here with a little cellar in each.”

She pulled him along, into another hall, one that opened onto the solarium. Here several little tents were pitched, each one tightly pressing right against the other. The hall was very dark, only here and there lamps cast a dim red light. She pulled back the flap from one of the tents and pulled him inside.

It was decorated in Persian. A small Persian lamp hung from the ceiling, with many carpets, and pillows. A couple of weapons hung on the side of the tent and there was a little wooden chest in back. Which she opened.

“Look!” She said.

A champagne cooler and a couple bottles in ice. Bottles of liquor next to them, then boxes with cigars and cigarettes. Also candy, pastries, and sandwiches.

She threw herself down onto the pillows.

“Make yourself comfortable!” She laughed. “Eat, drink, smoke – whatever you like.”

Where did you get your dress?” He asked. She looked amazing, this slender Frau, who was now a grandmother for two years. Her teeth gleamed, and were wonderfully even, like the famous pearl necklace, which she never took from her neck. Aimée Brietauer’s pearl necklace – 22 m long, worth over a million dollars – every New York shop girl spoke about it in hushed whispers. Her eyes shimmered a misty blue, and the effect of mystery was heightened by the fact that she was so nearsighted. Everything in her well-groomed face was harmonious – only the thin line of her lips slightly marred her beauty. She wore a tight, close-fitting gown of silver brocade, stiff with rich embroidery, and her reddish hair was done up high

with strands of pearls woven through it. She wore large pearls as earrings and more pearls on her hands.

“My dress?” She answered. “The painter Runk designed it for me and Blackland made it for me. I am supposed to be a Duchess from Cyprus, the mistress of Cardinal Colonna. Do you like the dress? Watch!”

She undid her silver belt, pulled the zipper, and her dress flew open like a shell: her body lay before him completely naked and she wore neither chemise nor stockings.

She turned, quick as a snake, tearing her arms out of the sleeves and threw them high.

“Now I am only in pearls!” She laughed. “Kiss me!”

He kissed her hand, poured out two glasses, and drank with her. You can afford such a dress, Aimée,” he cried, “with that figure!”

“Thank you!” She said. “But let’s be informal – for tonight! Princesses from Cyprus are so common, especially when they are naked! And the Cardinal’s mistress is downright –”

She interrupted herself, placed a finger on her mouth. “Hush!”. “Hush! There is someone next-door!”

You could hear soft voices in the neighboring tent. She crawled over on all fours, taking down a weapon from the wall of the tent, and peering through a little peep hole. Then she waved him over.

“Look through,” she whispered. “It’s Marion de Fox!”

He looked through the hole. Oh yes, that was her, the one who played Farnese, the Pope’s mistress. And with her she had the blonde twelve-year-old girl, Lucrezia Borgia, who had sat on her lap during the performance. She pulled the shoes and stockings off the child, gave her a little glass of sweet schnapps, and began stuffing her with candy. Whispering passionately, she kissed the little girl, and stripped off her dress –

Aimée Breitauer pushed him away, and peered kneeling through the peephole. Breathing quickly, pressing both hands on her firm, ample breasts. Then she threw herself back –

“Come!” She cried.

“Do you have peepholes in the walls of all of the tents?” He asked.

“Yes!” She answered quickly and impatiently. “All of them! That was Susan Pierpont’s idea. It’s really stimulating, to watch – don’t you think so –? Come – kiss me.”

She stretched out her arms and legs, kicked off her silver slippers –

Those feet – no woman had smaller feet then she did. Sweet feet, well manicured feet – feet, which made the men run after her on the streets, in theaters and restaurants. Feet, shod in extravagant, bizarre slippers, which turned many men's heads – but they could drive a man insane when they were naked.

Aimée Brietauer's pearl's – Aimée Breitauer's feet –

But he did not touch her. Something repelled him.

Yes, – she belonged here – as well as any of the other Moon Ladies. She was worth many millions of dollars, this daughter of a rich German butcher; was greedy for each pleasure, and could buy, anything she wanted. And she did it – without shame or good taste, often enough – just like the others. Perhaps she was a little more blunt the about it, a little more natural, – because that was her way –but she was a whore like the rest of them.

Something held him back –

It was not an attack of shyness, purity or virtue, oh no, not shame and not disgust. He wallowed in the swamp just like all of these other animals, rolled around with them, eating their food. And this naked Frau in her pearls, with her unbelievably well cared for body, whose glowing flesh smelled so enticing, whose soft curves that made her seem as eternally young as Aphrodite herself –

Didn't she just step out of a seashell, like the radiant naked one climbed out of the ocean foam?

And yet he shook his head. She was German – that was it. And it seemed to him, as if even the lowest prostitute in Germany was a Saint during these times.

But she knew how to tame him. She moved up closer to him, sitting with her arms stretched out behind her, overcoming his schoolboy scruples. She pulled up her legs, putting both feet on his lap –

"Your feet are beautiful," he said, "they are sweet like – like –"

He searched. Oh, oh, they must be the sweetest thing, that there was in the stars in heaven.

"Like Farstin's voice," he decided. "Heaven knows – they sing, your little feet."

And he hummed along with the melody that drifted into the love tent from somewhere far away:

"Up there on Mount Ida –"

Oh yes – she sat before him, the goddess. And he knew that he would give her the apple – she, who was dressed in the richest pearls of the sea.

Then she sang to him:

It was Venus who sat there next to him so silently and she remained silent. I must give the apple to her, Calchas, you know why!

"Evohe! These goddesses entice boys
Evohe! These goddesses have mysterious ways! – mysterious ways!"

And her feet giggled and played, and danced on his lap.

"You know," she whispered, "I received a letter from the workers committee this morning. They need money for their new press campaign – I have given them one thousand dollars – exactly, because I always give that much – no more and no less – for all of these things. This time I will give you five thousand, if –"

She pulled her feet loose with a jerk, kneeled, threw her arms around his neck, pulled off his brown robe.

"Come – why are you so shy?"

"Why do you want me?" He cried.

"Bah –" she laughed, "you – and others tonight! I want you – because it would make me very happy, to take you away from Frau van Ness."

"When will you send the check?" He asked. But he knew, that he would kiss her, because of her feet and not because of the money, which she would give for the German cause.

"Tomorrow – as soon as I wake up," she said. "Just call the office!"

She threw herself back – rolling over on the cushions.

"Oh how slow you are!" She continued. "And such an idea – to wear a jacket under a monk's cloak! It was much easier for Venus, when she kissed her Paris –"

He knelt beside her, naked as she was. She wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling him down.

"How does Frau van Ness kiss?" She asked.

"Shut up!" He hissed.

But she laughed out loud at him. She took the large pearl necklace from her neck, unfastened the catch and wound the pearls around their bodies.

“This is my happiness,” she cried, “and my delight! And tears for other women! I am life – take me!”

– Slowly their bodies separated, fell away from each other like tired snakes. He lifted the pearls from over his head, and sat up.

“Champagne,” she pleaded.

Then his hand trembled, spilling wine over her body.

“Cool, cold!” She said, drinking greedily.

She stretched out her limbs, a sensuous shudder ran through her skin. She slowly slid the pearls through her fingers.

“Greet Frau van Ness for me!” She said thoughtfully. “She is a clever Frau – certainly. I am a – prostitute – I know that as well as she does. She has you – but I have you and many others. Many men come to prostitutes – and a prostitute needs many men.”

“Sentimental?” He laughed. “Feeling tragic?”

She nodded. Sighed – then laughed.

“Always just a little – afterward, you know! – I think: this is what women are good for – and for nothing else! And man – even more true for them! That this is the only thing, that there is in life – and nothing else – except for this we are alone in the world. – If only the ecstasy wasn’t so short!” She sat up, and held out the glass to him. “More please!”

She emptied her glass, breathed deeply, so that her breasts heaved.

“Now I am all right – now I can laugh again! Ready for new deeds – who said that? Give me my dress will you!”

He picked it up, and held it out to her. Hesitated, and saw a slight movement at the side of the tent, a soft laugh echoed in his ear. And he saw – just like on the other side – a small, round peep hole.

“Someone is next-door!” He cried. “Someone has been spying on us!”

She kneeled back down in a moment. “Naturally!” She laughed happily. “That is what the peep holes are for. Hopefully we have given them some entertainment!”

She crawled to the side of the tent, and looked through.

It is Gordon,” she whispered, “she has the painter in there, the Italian – the one that played Rodrigo Borgia. Would you like to watch?”

“No!” He cried shortly, reaching for his clothes.

But she knelt there, watching. Eagerly drinking in the performance. He got dressed, drank a glass of wine, and smoked a cigarette, waiting.

Finally she turned around; her eyes sparkling.

“She is an animal, that Gordon,” she said. “She has –” she interrupted herself – “Ah, you are already dressed? Help me – it will be quick – clip, clap – and without a maid!”

He held the silver brocade, and she slipped into it in a moment. Then she went to the little chest, and took out a large hand mirror, comb, and powder box –

“We have thought of everything!” She laughed.

She sat down under the lamp, brushing her blond hair. She suddenly put the mirror away, and reached into a small pouch that hung on her belt. She took out a platinum frame that held a small notebook. She handed it to him along with a pencil.

“Write something,” she said, “while I get myself ready. Your name, the date and hour. If you like – write something else – about me!”

He laughed, went up to her, and kissed her neck.

“You are magnificent, Aimée, just as you are! This is a collection – isn’t it? Autographs from all of those, to whom you have given your favors – written down immediately after the hour of love?”

She nodded:

“Really, that’s what it is! – My most beautiful memories!”

He sat down, thought for a moment, then looked over at her, as if he wanted to draw her. Then he wrote.

She powdered herself, put fresh red on her lips and nostrils, and lightly polished her rosy nails.

“Have you finished?” He nodded, and handed it back to her.

She read:

“For Aimée Breitauer

Ain Haupt von Behmerland
Zway weiße Ärmlin von Prafand,
Ain Prust von Swaben her,
Von Kernten zwey Tüttlein ragend als ain Speer,
Ain Pauch von Ősterreich,

Zwai Pein von Flamland gleich
Und ein Ars von Polandt,
Auch ein bayrisch Fut daran,
Dazu zwey Füßlein von dem Rhein:
Das muss ein schöne Fraue gesein!

"I like that!" She said. "And the old poet really knew what matters in a woman! Today all they chat about are eyes and lips and they think about how free they are, if they speak of feet and breasts. But not one of them dares to mention the most important things!"

"You are right, Aimée!" He laughed. – But the old poet was herself – a woman, named Klara Hätzerlin, who lived in Nuremberg, around the time which we are celebrating tonight.

She tore off the page, and placed it beneath in the frame.

"Ready for the next one?" He cried.

"Yes!" She replied, most seriously. "The notepad and me – both!"

She laid the mirror and the makeup back in the chest, closed it, and straightened out the pillows.

And this nest here as well! – Where are my shoes?"

He picked them up and put them on for her, kissing her little feet one more time. She pulled him up, and offered him her lips.

"You are very sweet," she said. "I thank you. – And Auf Wiederschaun!"

* *
*

He went through the hall to the check room to get his coat. But as the attendant was helping him into it, Andre cried out to him.

"Stay a little longer, Doctor, I will bring you home later in my auto. I need a fourth player for a game of Mauschel. My conductor and old Frau Godefroy are waiting – they're sitting upstairs. It's just for an hour."

He took off his coat again, pushing it under his arm.

Just them Farstin passed by, deeply hidden in furs. With her was a young thing, tender and slender, but just as hidden in her coat as the Diva was.

"Have you had enough too, gentlemen?" She cried. "Good night!"

“You sang marvelously!” Cried the director, “Beautiful beyond description! There is nothing, which a person can compare your voice to.”

“Yes there is!” Said Frank Braun. “Her voice is sweet, like – like the little feet of Aimée Breitauer.”

“He ought to know!” Laughed Andre. “She dragged him along – to her love tent.”

Emmaldine Farstin took a step toward him and stared at him.

“She did?” She turned around sharply, and cried back. “She deserves him!”

She put her arm around the little girl and dragged her away.

“What was that all about?” Asked the director.

Frank Braun shrugged his shoulders. “She hates me – heaven knows why!”

Andre laughed. “Oh, these women! Did you see who Farstin took with her? No? – That was little Davies, the one that played Columbine. Susan Pierpont will burst with rage when she finds out!”

They went past the bar, and there sat, half naked, and completely drunk, Miss Marlborough, bellowing out “Tipperary” with a couple of men. As they came to the steps, Andre stopped for a moment – and threw a quick glance back at the hall of love.

“There goes that Gouraud woman,” he laughed. “Look over there – she’s taking three into her tent – three at once!”

“Who are they?” He asked.

“Footmen,” answered the director, “chorus girls – how do I know! Gouraud goes for the tall ones!”

Very tame and gentle, now wrapped in a Benedictine’ s cloak, the wild Finn Hevonpää came down the stairs. With him came Aimée Breitauer, who was swinging a gray band of rubber in her hand.

“Do you know what this is?” She laughed.

“What is it?” He asked.

At that she cried:

“The wrestler’ s loincloth – I have taken it from him! He is more comfortable than you – wearing only Adam’s jacket under his cloak!”

“If I had sung the victory song, it would be different,” opined Andre.’ “Then I would’ve taken the girdle away from Brunhild in the wrestling match.” He took her hand, and kissed it very politely. “Tell me,” he continued, “victorious, girdle robbing Brunhild – would you like to take

part in something else? In three weeks I'm bringing a new show to Broadway, and giving away, as customary, half of the parts. – How big a part would you need?"

"As much as you give me!" Nodded Breitauer. "But let me decide for myself: I want to see, how it goes –

How magical it is!"

"Salvete, Oh Gladiator! Gaudim multum habeas!" Cried Andre to the wrestler.

"Gratiam tibi ago, artitex! Summ quisque optimum facit," answered the berserker passionately.

He waved and moved on, following his lady.

Frank Braun asked:

"What, the fellow speaks Latin?"

"And Greek and Hebrew!" Nodded the director. "He studied theology – and lost his faith and his money at the same time. Came over here – here he doesn't use the knowledge in his brain – he must wrestle with his arms and legs in order to get what he needs."

* *
*

It seemed empty in the yellow hall. People were only playing poker at three tables; way back in the corner sat the conductor, Milan, with his magnificent, early graying long hair. With him, in a nun's habit, was Frau Godefroy, with a fat cigar in her mouth. She was a heavyset fifty-year-old, who was always laughing, always happy, and was always there, when something was going on. And she was most certainly always in the game room after a short time.

"Finally!" She cried. "Your deal, director! There are your chips, please count them! The blue ones are ten dollars, the red ones are five, and the white ones are one dollar. – Now deal!"

They played. Andre lost and became happier, the more he lost.

They played, smoked and drank. They also chatted, Frau Godefroy knew all the latest jokes and the freshest gossip in the city.

“Do you know, who hooked handsome van Straaten tonight? Baron de Becker and Baroness de Becker – both at the same time.”

An hour passed and then another. They played and laughed and drank.

Then Ernst Rossius slipped into the back of the hall, looked around shyly, and sat down at a table. He pulled something out of his pocket, and laid it on the table. Then bent over, as if he wanted to write something.

Director Andre cried out at him.

“Well, are you having a good time?”

The face of the youth was radiant, his eyes glowed.

“I have experienced something,” he stammered. “Which I have never dreamed, could be possible.”

“Tell us about it!” Cried Andre. “Who was it? We are terribly curious.”

“I would rather cut my hand off,” he said passionately, “before I betray her name! A lady has kissed me – a lady – the most marvelous woman in the world!”

“Only kissed, nothing else?” Asked the conductor.

Rossius laughed loudly. “Nothing else? – If only you had any idea! Nothing like this has ever happened to a person before!”

He spread his arms out wide, as if embracing the air. In his right hand he held the little frame.

Beautiful Aimée’s notebook.

“What have you got there?” Cried Frank Braun. “Let me see it!”

Rossius unsuspectingly gave him the notebook.

“She gave me this and told me to write a poem for her and then bring it back. A poem about – oh God! Not even Byron could describe it!”

“Sit down!” Cried the conductor. “Eat, drink – then something will occur to you!”

The young man sat down, and let Frau Godefroy filled up his plate. And he ate with a healthy appetite. Frank Braun held the silver notebook under the table, curiously pulling the top page away. There was a signature on the first page – with a mediocre sketch. Then, diagonally across the second page in large letters, written in large boisterous letters, was the word: AMOTO. Amato, the fabulous movie star!

But the third page showed more, in clear, intelligent, and beautiful handwriting. It said:

“Bibet, miscet ill’ cum illa

Miscet servus cum ancilla!
Miscet coqua cum factore!
Miscet Abbas cum Priore!
Et pro Rege et pro Papa
Bibunt vinum sine aqua.
Et pro Papa et pro Rege
Miscent omnes sine lege.
Donec nihil sit in fundo!

And under it, in old Roman letters like the script on a tombstone, was the signum of the erudite wrestler:

Sulonus Hevonpäus Helsingforsensis,
Qui studiosus Theologiae Dorpatensis,
Christum, Dominus, Sanctum Spiritum
Corde calidissimo quaesivit,
Studioque ardente. Quos atque perdidit.
Qui, doctus ludi Graeci-Romanique
Mundum percurrit, sed arte stultorum
Vivit. Qua nocte Coelum rapuit,
–Amato amatam Amatam amato –
Bibens, Amatam coiens.

Frank Braun carefully put the sheets back into the frame and handed it back to Rossius.

"Write," he said, "I know a beautiful poem for you!"

The secretary hesitantly picked up a pencil.

"I'm supposed to write something myself –" he said.

"Just write," laughed Frank Braun. "You won't be able to think of anything tonight anyway. And the poem that I want to tell you, will do wonderfully – just write! You recently read Rabelais – do you remember a little of the old French spelling? You must use that!"

"That would be very learned!" The conductor agreed.

"But not too much!" Replied Frank Braun. "Now – my boy – as I dictate!" He recited:

"Nature n'est pas si sote,
Qu'ele faist nosire Marote

Tant solement por Robichon
Se l'entendement i fichon!
Ne Pobichon por Mariete,
Ne por Agnes, ne por Perette!
Ele nous a faist, bele fille, n'en doutes.
Toutes por tous et tous por toutes,

Chascune por chascun commune
Et chascun commun por chascune!”

Ernst Rossius moved uncomfortably on his chair, but he kept writing.

“Is that all?” He cried then. “I can’t possibly give that to her!”

Underneath write *“Le Roman de la Rose”* with your name and the date – and don’t forget the hour! – Aimée Breitauer will love the poem – and she will give you another hour with her – if you pleased her otherwise.”

Rossius stared at Frank Braun, his arms dropping to his sides.

“How do you know her name, Doctor?”

“Because I recognize the notebook, my boy,” he answered. “She collects the autographs of all of her lovers in a very well filled album!”

The director laughed.

“The Breitauer album? – I’m also in it – twice, I believe! You have plenty of company in that book, young friend, good and bad alike – like everything else in New York.”

Ernst Rossius jumped up, all the blood drained from his face. He struggled for words, then cried:

“That is not true. That is a lie, an infamy –”

He could not finish the sentence, great tears welled up in his eyes.

“Go now,” said Frank Braun, “bring the beautiful Frau her love book!”

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He was having tea with Lotte the next afternoon.

“You went to the celebration of the Moon Ladies?” She asked.

He nodded. “Shall I confessed to you, Lotte?”

But she shook her head.

“That is not necessary. Show me your little knife.”

He took it out of his pocket, and handed it to her. He watched curiously as she took it out of its leather case, removed the cotton, and opened the blade –

The blade was shiny, and clean, without a spot on it – it sparkled as brightly as ever.

She gave it back to him, and she seemed very satisfied.

“Now I know that you have been faithful to me!” She said.

He stared at her. “But, Lotte,” he began, “I –”

She placed her hand on his lips. “Don’t talk, “she smiled, “what do you know of it? The little knife tells me more, then you can.”

He thought:

“Your little knife doesn’t know anything!”

But he let her believe; if that’s what made her happy.

Chapter Ten: Topazes

"At first under protection of the muse or the devil I was later cast out into the midst of pandemonium."
–Gius. Giustl.

"Often, there is an affliction of the eyes, which could be completely healed, but is not recognized, when a milky discharge clouds the clear gaze. But this discharge of the eyes can be inhibited by a topaz. And that is why it is called the stone of Matthew, because it was given to him to bring light to his congregation, whose hearts had become dark; and to heal those, who had eyes to see and could not see."
–Andreas, Bishop of Caesarea (10th-century)

Three people sat in front of him, two men and a Frau.

Paul Conchas, the strongest man in the world, big Muscle King, famed for twenty-five years in all kinds of variety shows around the world. Almost 50, yet with a figure like young Mars – on the stage of the Dresden Court Opera House the night world marveled at his legs. Next to him sat his clown, Fritz Neuhof, from Berlin, ugly and grotesque – who accompanied the athlete around the world, and filled the intermissions with bizarre antics, while the other took a break. – The woman was Swedish. Slender and blonde.

"Have you written down the addresses?" Asked Frank Braun.

His secretary came over.

"Here they are."

Frank Braun handed the paper to the athlete.

"Here they are," he repeated. "If you want to take the risk –"

"Most certainly!" Said Conchas. "She sails next week."

What was the court ruling against your girlfriend?" Asked Frank Braun. "What did she get?"

"A fine of three thousand dollars – yesterday – it is a miracle, that the pigs didn't lock her up!" Answered the performer.

"I will see to it, that I have the money for her departure," he said. "How much do you need for this new undertaking?"

Paul Conchas replied:

“Nothing. Just for her. I will pay for everything else myself, that is much simpler. Both my sons are over there on the front – they are doing more than I can.”

It was another attempt to smuggle rubber overseas – which was so scarce in Germany. Anna Bergen, the Muscle King’s girlfriend, had already smuggled some across four times, but the fifth time had been a failure. The American customs officials had searched her luggage before departure – twenty large chests – found the rubber and confiscated it.

The Yankees would only allow things to leave the country, if they had been properly declared, but she immediately gave them the name of the English gentleman Bescheid, whom she was taking them to in Kirkwall. But the rubber had not been properly declared – and that was against the law in the states. It was a falsification of documents and a prisonable offense. Not one day passed, without the courts – in order to appease England – arresting Germans and sticking them into prisons.

“I think it is a miracle, that a German in this country is still permitted to spit!” Cried Neuhof.

Frank Braun turned to the blonde Frau.

“You know, that you will certainly go to jail this time, if the story gets out?” He asked her. “Do you still want to go?”

The Swede nodded. “I know. – I’m going.”

“Naturally she’s going!” Cried the Berliner. “What Paul will give his Anna, is much needed! It is something that can really show, how much sympathy there is for Germany – it is much better, than collecting stupid tinfoil.”

The secretary said:

“We have some of that for you too.”

He brought out a cigar box, that was filled to the top with tinfoil.

“It will be accepted with the greatest gratitude by the widows and orphans!” Said Neuhof. “What do you think – on our last journey we smuggled out a small ton, nearly 70 kilos.”

That had been the idea of the German performer, to collect tinfoil from cigarettes, cigars, candy and chocolates. The folk from the variety shows and from vaudeville, all the Fratelli Salvini, Harrison sisters, Valerie, Dixon, Korsakoff, as well as jugglers, dancers, craftsmen, trapeze artists; from all those with good German names like Huber and Maier and Klein and Schulz, they collected tinfoil. Smuggled it together from all the cities

across the country, collected it in bars and on the streets, begging for every little piece that someone might have. They shipped it back to New York, where it went to a large collecting place on board the “Vaterland”. Oh no, it didn’t bring in much, only sixty-eight cents per pound – and it was astounding, how many of the little papers it took to make a pound. Yet it was enough to earn a couple hundred dollars for the Red Cross every month. And then there was – the joy of the work: always, through the entire day and until late into the night, those times when you slid the tinfoil across your temples, thinking about how you were helping the homeland.

Ernst Rossius laid the new newspaper on the table, which the old servant had just brought.

“New chatter about a rumor of peace,” he said.

“If only it were true!” Cried the man of muscle.

“Now would be a good time for it. – In the East we have marched deeply into Russia, and in the West we hold Belgium and Northern France, in the South Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania. The English have been driven back in Mesopotamia; had to release the Dardanelles, are hard-pressed in the Sudan and have a pretty witches brew in Ireland! The Mohammedians have driven the Italians out of Tripoli, the Austrians have retaken Trentino and broken into Italy. Every night the Crown Prince pushes closer to Verdun! And we are still holding out in Africa! Now would be the moment, now!”

His voice rose, his eyes glowed. But then he beat with his fist on the table, and sighed deeply.

“And I bet – it will not happen! Our glorious boys are willing to spill their blood by the millions – but those idiotic fellows, that play diplomat for us – will certainly let the right moment go by! And even if they could make peace – it would be only a pathetic illusion. Serbia, Montenegro would remain countries – the Belgians would get their land back –”

At that the Berliner jumped up.

“What?” He screamed. “No war! The little bit that they still have, they can keep! – The bullets can fly over there, to see who will keep what!”

“Yes, if you were the Reich’s Chancellor!” Cried Paul Conchas. “But not only would we give everything back, we would add to that the upper Rhine: all our colonies, then south Tyrol, Alsace Lorraine, Istria, Trieste, Dalmatia, Galatia, and Bukovina, our Polish scraps – and even more, just

wait my boy! – The Kaiser should hang our entire pack of diplomats, who have pulled the wool over everyone's eyes for twenty years now!"

"He would never do that!" Screamed Neuhof. "Watch out! I am a social Democrat – would have voted for Fritze Zubeil if I was back home at mother's! But I give all the credit to the Kaiser! Herr God – man only knows – what is up with this foreign outcry everywhere in all five parts of the earth, where we have just now arrived, after all this time! In the past you could have sworn that he was the most beloved man in the world! – And now? Every day you see him depicted in the papers as a type of hybrid between a lunatic and a criminal, and no one knows whether he is a changeling taken from a prison or from a lunatic asylum! And in their articles they call him a lousy ape, a mad dog, a mass murderer, a baby killer and other pretty words! – And all of that, because the man finally has the courage, to be a German! If I only knew, what the rest of us were doing."

"Don't be so hard on us," cried Paul Conchas. "We have better heads, because we are adaptable and can work! – What is the entire so-called international community of artists? They are all German, with only a few others that can't even be counted! And it's like that with the merchants, engineers, chemists, with the military, the marines, with industry, management and all the arts – we are at the top – everywhere! Only in politics: there are no greater asses, then those we send! The devil take me – the Kaiser should –"

But the Berliner interrupted him.

"Don't get all upset, Paul, or you might upset your stomach! And then it would be just as uncomfortable, as the beer, which they call Pilsner over here."

He jumped up, and reached out to shake hands with Frank Braun.

"Leave everything to us, Doctor, it will be done! And many thanks for the tinfoil!"

Frank Braun accompanied them to the door, and came back.

"Is anyone else still there?" He asked.

"One is still waiting, I will bring him right in."

Frank Braun sat down, bracing his arms and letting his head fall heavily onto the table. He felt so miserably tired today, so hollow and empty inside.

"I am not a man anymore," he thought. "I am an inflated pig's bladder, I grow fat and tall, and then make loud noises when I hit the floor. And I am

hollow, empty, so empty –”

The man , whom Rossius brought in, looked very shabby. He was pockmarked, bull necked, almost without a neck. He was bowlegged as well, and his greasy black hair was slicked down over his head. He smelled of stable and of whiskey. Without a word of greeting, he came right up to him, uncertain and shy, and held out a dirty card to him.

It was Tewes business card.

“Perhaps you can help this man,” was written on it.

“Take a seat,” he said. “What can I do for you?”

But the man didn’t sit down. He turned his cap in his hand.

“Ich bin deserter. Si vous voulez mich outkicken, tun Sie de seguido.”

Frank Braun laid the card in front of him on the table.

“The man that sent you to me must have his reasons,” he said. “Tell me – when did you come over – and how?”

“Nicht heuer – sure!” Answered the man. “Hay doze años dass Ich gemoved bin.”

He had deserted twelve years ago – from a Uhlan regiment at St. Avold, right on the border. With two others at the same time, who had told him how stupid it all was. That there would never be a war in Europe in the twentieth century, and the Army was there only to repress the people and nothing else. – But after fourteen days he was once more stuck in a new uniform, that of the French Foreign Legion. After a wild night of drinking he had come to in a train that was traveling to Marseilles. He wore the uniform in Algiers for two long years, until he found an opportunity to desert again. He fled to Morocco, then back to Spain and finally across to Argentina. There he worked as a gaucho on a Rancho. Then, when the war broke out, he couldn’t endure it anymore in the Pampas. In Buenos Aires he got a job as a Stoker on a steamer that was headed for New York.

“And now you are stuck here – and can’t get across, right?” Asked Frank Braun. This story was not new to him, he had heard it many times before – or variations of it. From all parts of the world they had converged on New York – from Eastern Asia, and all the countries in the Americas, from Australia and all the islands in the Pacific. Even from Africa, from Spain and Portugal, and from England itself. And here they sat – could go no further – the Yankees took care of that. Frank Braun even recognized the dialect the man spoke, a clumsy German sprinkled with Spanish, English and French.

“Can’t get over, Señior?” Cried the black haired man. “Ich war déjá three times in Europa this year. Nur nach Deutschland – that can’t be done!”

He had been a gaucho his entire life. Had grown up in the stables on a French estate. Then a soldier in a German cavalry Regiment, later an orderly to the surgeon in the Foreign Legion, and finally a gaucho in the Argentine Pampas – wherever he had been, he had had something to do with horses. So he finally arrived in New York and, after many weary weeks, had found out that it was impossible to get over to Germany, and had decided to make war against the allies single-handedly. He saw that stable boys were needed badly, to act as watchmen for the large transports of horses and mules going over to Italy, France and England. Only the flotsam of humanity could be found for this work, and therefore, the authorities did not bother much about papers and documents. And he, black haired and tanned, with his impossible mixture of languages, could play French to the English, and Spanish to the French. He soon found a job on a transport of horses bound for Cherbourg, and then with another for Saloniki.

Ernst Rossius turned upon him feriously.

“So you brought horses to our enemies, did you!”

The man grinned a broad grin, showing a few black stumps of teeth. He put his cap down on the table and addressed the secretary.

The allies will not get much satisfaction out of those horses, he said. Did the secretary know what mallein was? No? Mallein was the bacillus that transferred Glanders disease. How had he got it, Frank Braun asked. Oh, one could get anything in New York for money! He had smeared that stuff into the nostrils of the horses, one by one, hoping they would infect the others, as well.

The third time they had caught him. He was to accompany a transport – to Portsmouth this time, with two thousand horses. He had started right in with his work; while they were still in New York harbor he had poisoned twenty-seven horses when the Canadian officer caught him. He had fled, racing up the companionway on deck, with the officer right behind him, emptying his revolver at him. A bullet had hit him in the left arm, but had only grazed the skin and did not hurt much, just a flesh wound. So he had jumped overboard, had swam across the harbor and made his getaway.

“When did that happen?” Frank Braun asked.

Last night. But that wasn't all. He had walked up and down the waterfront until his clothes were dry, after first washing his bleeding arm and bandaging it with his handkerchief. But the handkerchief probably was dirty and must have been in contact with the poison, because –

He painfully turned up the sleeve of his coat, showing his arm. It was swollen and almost purple, in some spots even green and black. Thick blue lymph strands radiated in all directions from the small bullet wound.

That was why he had come. He could not go to any doctor – that would meet immediate arrest. And it was high time that something was done – he knew the effect of the poison. In Sidi bel Abbas one of the surgeon's assistants had become infected and had died in spite of all the hospital treatment.

Frank Braun thought rapidly, then went to the telephone and called a number. He talked for a long time, and finally he sat down and wrote an address which he handed to his secretary.

"Get a taxi cab and take the man to this address!" Then he turned to the man. "The physician is a Jew. Just give him your name and address – he won't ask questions. He will keep you in his clinic until you get well."

"Well, nous verrons, carajo!" The man said. "Là, der Arm muss 'runter, dann could I be saved – peut-être! Vamos! It wouldn't matter about me –je mlen fiche – if I could only poison the Franzosen and Engländer noch a few thousand potros! Hast luego, monsieur – darf ich ask you noch a favor? Là, sewed in my coat are my Ersparnisse – mas als five hundred dollars. Pay the Doktor damit, wenn er den dinero will – not den entiero, ich pfif' darauf – et le reste – geben Sie dem Red Cross! Für den Fall that I die – bien compris? –Au revoir, caballero – muchisismus gracias!"

Frank Braun tried to rise to shake hands with the man. His legs trembled and he sank back into his chair.

"Excuse me, please!" He said. "I am not very well myself."

The secretary rushed over to him, lifting him up by the armpits.

"Lie down on the sofa, Doctor, and rest a while."

He waved the help back. Pulled himself up by himself, with a great strength of will. Then dragged himself over to the table, grabbed onto the back of a chair, and collapsed down onto the sofa.

"Shall I tell Fred to bring you some lunch?" Rossius asked. "No? – Then rest a little, Doctor, lie down for a few hours. And don't forget, you

are speaking tonight at the German Chamber of Commerce – you must be fresh for that. I will come around 9 o'clock, to pick you up."

He threw a heavy blanket over him, moved up a little table, got a glass of water and put it down along with some strychnine pills.

"You might want to take one," he opined. "Sometimes it helps."

Frank Braun nodded. He wanted to tell him to disconnect the phone, but he could not move his lips: it seemed to him, as if his brain were incapable of giving any command. And he thought, that it didn't matter, because his limbs would not be able to carry them out anyway.

He heard them both go, heard the door open and close. And then another –

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Then it was quiet. He was freezing, his teeth clattered together. He wanted to press them tightly together, but it didn't work. Then he tried to find a rhythm to the chatter, but there was none, they chattered, chattered, fast and then slow, stopped and then started again. He wanted to take a drink of water, but could not move his arm.

The telephone rang. It rang, shrilled, screamed. Again, and then again. The noise bored into his ears, hammered cruelly against his brain. He pulled up the blanket, hid his head under it and stuffed his fingers into his ears. No use. It rang and screamed and bellowed endlessly, piercing him with a thousand sharp knives. Finally it goaded him to his feet

He stood on his legs, staggered through the room, fell down into a chair, and gripped the receiver. Lotte – yes! Why had he kept her waiting? – He had not heard it ring. – But for a quarter of an hour – no, no, he really hadn't heard it – but – no – nothing! – His hand trembled, his voice sobbed.

Was he sick? – No! – Yes he was, yes, she could hear it! – Well yes – but only a little. – She was out in Atlantic City – she would take the next train back to the city. Was he going to speak tonight? – Yes, he was going to speak – then she would expect him for tea afterwards. – Yes, yes, he would come.

He hung up the receiver, and a cold sweat broke out from his pores. His arms hung down limply at his sides and his head dropped against his chest.

He knew: now he would fall from the chair. Then he would lie on the floor and would forget everything – not know anything.

Again it was a sound, that held him up right. A door opening, soft footsteps –

He saw Fred, the old Butler standing before him, dumb, without feeling. He wanted to ask him, plead with him, to help him, to help him to bed –

What did he want? Yes, but what – what did he want! – Why was he standing there? Had he rang for him?

He said:

“Make my bath for me! Hot, very hot.”

He smiled. Why take a bath? Oh, it was just something – it didn’t matter. Some command for this wooden head– then send him away.

Fred said:

“Yes, Herr,”

He went through the room, took a silver plate from the fireplace mantle, and laid a card on it. Then he came back, and handed him the card.

“This lady wants to see you.”

He took the card, glanced at it – but he couldn’t read the letters. He heard the thin rasping voice:

“A lady –” but he didn’t know, what it meant.

He thought:

“Go, you animal, go. Why are you torturing me?”

And he nodded. Said:

“Yes.” He murmured: “My bath –”

He watched the old man go, heard the steps again on the carpet. Then some speaking – and again steps returning. Then a Frau stood before him. She was heavily veiled.

“Who are you?” He whispered. He thought: “Lotte. – And why the black veil again? Your husband has long since been dead, your father as well –”

Why was she wearing a veil?

For him –? But he was still alive – he was still alive.

“Who are you?” He whispered again.

Then he heard her voice. What was she saying –?

She was Spanish– yes! She lifted her veil.

Now he could see her. The dancer, the Goyita – Dolores Echevarria. Her dark sapphire blue eyes sparkled.

Was he sick? She asked. He nodded; yes, a little bit; he was tired.

She explained. She had come from Sonora; and had been in New York since yesterday, with her wolf and her hurdy-gurdy man. She had promised to bring him mescal buttons; here she was. And here they were. She opened her bag, took out a little kerchief, untied it, and showed him the dried cactus buttons.

He sat up instantly.

“That will help,” he said. “Now, now!”

He took the kerchief with trembling hands. Plugged the electric cord into the socket.

“Water!” He cried. “Fred, bring some water!”

The old man came, and filled up the little teakettle.

“Your bath is ready, Herr,” he announced. “Do you have any other commands for me?”

He looked at him, and shook his head. “No, no! Go!”

And the old man left.

He tried to lift up the teakettle but he was too weak and had to set it down again because his arm was trembling so badly. He steadied himself on the back of the chair, breathing heavily.

The dancer followed his movements.

“What are you doing?” She asked.

“Making tea,” he answered. “From the peyote. Perhaps it will help!”

She took the teakettle, and set it on the hot plate.

“Let me do it,” she cried. Then she dropped the yellow fruit into the teakettle.

He said: “Thank you. – I will take a bath. And then lie down. Then drink the tea.”

The Goyita nodded.

“Yes, go! Your tea will be ready.”

He went into the bathroom, and undressed, coughing, groaning. He held his hand in the water – it was scalding hot. Nevertheless he climbed in, and stretched out – felt as if he was burning in the heat.

Then he grew accustomed to the heat. Lay in the water, not moving. He didn’t sleep, and he was not awake, not thinking. There was nothing, nothing –

Nothing without, and nothing within. Nothing.

Then he was freezing. He climbed out of the tub, and rubbed himself dry. Then put on his pajamas and a kimono over them. Then he went back through the rooms.

The teakettle and a cup stood on the little table beside the sofa.

He sat down, poured the dark brew into the cup and drank.

Then he heard her voice.

“How does it taste?”

He looked up – she was still there, the Goyita. She sat there in the back in a chair without her hat, without gloves.

“Bad!” He answered. “Very bitter.”

“You had a long bath,” she continued. “I was getting worried about you. Was going to ring for your servant. – Do you believe, that the mescal tea will help you?”

He shrugged his shoulders. “Perhaps! I don’t know.”

“They tell such marvelous things about it in Mexico,” she said. “Do you know anything about it?”

“It is intoxicating,” he replied. “A strange intoxication – entirely different from any others. I have tried them all – a long time ago – opium, hashish and muscarine, digitalis, kawa-kawa, ganga, cocaine and many others. Nothing acts like mescal. It is a strange intoxication – that makes you see colors, bright colors.”

“I would like to try it,” the Goyita said. “Is it harmful?”

“Harmful?” He smiled painfully. “No, it is not harmful. It may be easy to become a morphine addict, a drunkard, a hashish eater – but one cannot become a mescal addict. You yourself know how difficult it is to get it.”

She fetched herself a cup and sat down beside him.

“Pour me some, please.”

He filled her cup to the brim.

“Aren’t you afraid? You will be intoxicated, you will be here completely unconscious for several hours. And you’re in a strange house – with a stranger –”

The dancer looked at him for a long time with her large Sapphire eyes:

Oh no,” she said seriously,” I am not afraid. You – are a German.”

He thought:

“So what! But really – you don’t need to be afraid! I am so weak and so miserable – and I will be intoxicated – like you. So you are safe!”

And he said:

“Shut the door.”

She did as he asked. Came back, took the cup out of his hand, and emptied it.

“Now another!” He said.

Filled both cups again. They drank. Something drew him to this Frau –

She smiled:

“What now? I am very curious.”

He sank back on the sofa, completely exhausted from all the effort. She noticed, and kindly adjusted the pillow under his head.

“Is that all right?” She asked.

He nodded.

“Thank you!” He whispered. “Lay down on the large chair – the leather one over there. Take some pillows. Then – unbutton your blouse – it is good if you can breathe freely and if nothing presses on your heart. You also need to open your bodice – or take it off!”

“I don’t wear one,” said the Frau.

He saw – but veiled, as if through a fog, how she made her clothing comfortable. How she went over to the leather easy chair, threw pillows around and stretched out.

“Do you know a copla of the rumba?” He whispered. “Please sing it to me – until – you fall asleep.”

She sang, softly, very softly:

“La Rumbita que yo bailo,
La de Rumba, Rumba, Rumba,
Es muchissimo más dulce
Que unos labios de mujer!
Ay, ay, ay! Co, co, co.”

Monotonous, always the same words. Always the same rhythm. He tried to remember the image, of how she had danced for Villa and the general’s. But he couldn’t – he only saw Villas’ apelike face – and the eagle nosed face of his adjutant. And then he saw the dancer’s head: Sapphire blue eyes mounted in white. And a black circle of hair around them – then he was asleep.

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The sun, the sun and the path on the beach. Straight above him stood the sun, high in the noon sky, as he sat in the sand of the cool dunes. The ocean sparkled and the sand glowed. Every now and then a farmer passed by, riding on top of heavy laden mules. Silent, slowly without a sound. Disappeared into the distance, came back into view, and disappeared again. There were no shadows anywhere, no where. The sun stood straight above him.

Then he stood up, and went toward the city.

Something was walking with him – around him. Everything was silent, everything was crystal-clear around him. There was only the sand and ocean and the sun. He stood for awhile, looking around him, and then continued walking.

Then he found it – a long shadow walked in front of him. His shadow.

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Red and yellow. Red and yellow. Everywhere red and yellow in the city. Today was Festival day and in greater Corridas –Miurastiere, Belmonte, Gaona and Joselito – waved flags in the colors of the country. Everywhere throughout the cities – red and yellow. A good wind blew from the ocean, from the southwest – and all the flags waved toward the northeast, as he went, where all the other people were going, inland, to where the bullfight was. It was like a mighty magnet, pulling everything toward it.

No one came from the other way, no one. Everyone went along this broad street. And with them fluttered the flags, red and yellow – toward Corrida.

But one flag, one flag didn’t go with the rest. He saw it clearly, a large old flag, frayed at the ends. It didn’t hang down from the flagpole, was not solidly tangled in its rope. No, it fluttered quite well, waved like all the other flags, but it waved – against the wind.

No one saw it, no one paid attention to it. Only Corrida attracted the flags and the people –

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He knew very well that he lay there in a dream. He had taken mescal, a strong hallucinogen, two large cups full. He lay on the broad sofa in his apartment, in New York on 23rd St. On his guanaco fur. He was very conscious of all this

And he also knew: that it was entirely impossible, for a flag to blow against the wind. Like it was impossible, to cast a shadow at noon.

And yet he cast a long shadow. And yet the red and yellow flag waved against the wind.

In Puerto Santa Maria, as he went to the bullfight.

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Someone sat next to him on the stone benches, a very fat man. An enormously fat man, an immensely fat man, one that took up space for three, who overhung the bench in front and back and on both sides.

“Water!” Snapped the fat man. And the galago poured a tall glass full for him.

“More!” Coughed the fat man. Then another and another.

The fat man drank fifteen glasses and then twenty.

“More!” He moaned, “more!”

Down below in the arena Joselito was with his Veronicas, the brother of the little Gallo.

“Olé!” Shouted the crowd, as the Sevillaner passed his scarlet cloth right in front of the bull’s eyes, and grabbed its left horn, kneeling down in front of the animal. “Olé!”

But the fat man panted: “More!” Filled himself up, expanding, growing on all sides. “More!”

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The strong Veneno hung on the old nag, which the bull charged. Two horses already lay in the sand – this was the third, which it took on its horns. Then the armored picador was thrown down, splat, ungainly – on his head, as always. He crawled out from under the nag, got up, and waddled away. But the bull bored its horns into the horse's body, and tore out the intestines. Then it turned around, and raced over to the other side – toward the black nag, which Catalino rode.

Then a woman screamed on the shadow side. Sprang up in the box, took off her veil, and threw her handkerchief to the ground. She screamed, screeched, and jumped down the steps – over the balustrade into the sand. She ran across, and stood in the sun, screaming, screaming. And began to undress.

Someone cried: "She is crazy!"

"Grab her! Get her out of there!" Shouted the crowd.

The Toreros ran up to her.

But the Frau tore the clothes from her body, her skirt, and blouse. She stood there, naked on the yellow sand. She only had her shoes on and long red stockings.

A banderillero raced over to her, hung his cloak around her. Then she allowed herself to be led away, going quietly with him back to the benches. Then she stopped for a moment, hesitated, saw how the bull was tearing at the nag of the red jacketed Catilino.

Then she screamed again, tore herself loose, and ran across the sand. She placed herself right in front of the miserable nag, as if she wanted to protect it. Spreading both arms out wide.

Yet she fled in deathly fear, as the horns sank into the black haired man from Muira. Then she ran screaming across the arena.

But she didn't get far. She hesitated, fell – then the bull took her.

Threw her high, jabbed his horns into her body. Her intestines flowed into the sand – like those of the horse.

The Toreros waved their cloaks, and guided the bull away in a moment. And the Sevillaner killed it quickly, with one good blow – of the blade.

The medics came with a litter. They laid the naked Frau on top of it, wrapped her up, and carried her out –

Under the yellow and red cloth she was still screaming, screaming.

"A lunatic!" Shouted the people. "A crazy person!"

But the fat man moaned: "More! More!"

And was always drinking water. No, he wasn't drinking water – he breathed water.

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He sat in the rocks on the beach with the small painter.

The painter said: "Gauguin is guilty and no one else. He was the worst man and was jealous of the Hollander. And when he visited him at Arles, van Gogh was poisoned by the other's insanity. That's when he cut his ear off, went into the whorehouse and gave it to her – with a pretty greeting for Herrn Gauguin."

"Why did he cut his own ear off?" He asked.

The painter said: "He cut it off – that is history. Everyone knows it. The entire world knows it. Picasso has the ear."

"Where did he get it?" He insisted.

"I don't know," cried the painter, "that doesn't matter at all. He had it – that is his inheritance from van Gogh – You could just as well say, it could have been his eye – or his hand – but that is entirely false. You must pay attention to the times – around the time when he was a painter. So Picasso was not able to do anything with his inheritance – even though he is from Malaga. Or somewhere around there."

He moved up closer, his voice sank, looked around, as if someone might be listening.

They sat entirely alone in the rocks, by the ocean in the sun.

"I will tell you," whispered the little man. "Painting – is like bullfighting: that is the secret! And never, as long as the world stands – will a good painter come from Malaga – or even a good torero! Who comes from Malaga? Larita, Paco Madrid – noisy brutes! Rough fellows, Espadas and nothing else – they don't have even a glimmer of skill! They might be brave and go out there – and in the best case manage to become a desert estocada. But to become Veronicas, without moving their feet, and by kneeling, their cape over one arm, all that which is art is in the fine details – they have no idea how to do that! Gaona has discovered its Gaoneras – Joselito – dear God –Molinetes! – Belmonte – what a mediocre Veronicas! And old Gallo is still a powerful genie! What a man he is – a real man! He has the highest courage and incomparable skill today – and yet tomorrow

will run away from the bull like an old woman, he makes common mistakes! As if they were new! Why? Because he runs like a black dog over the sand! – With me it's the collar. People never look at it – when they buy a painting – but they notice later, when they work – both make one the hero – and the other a coward. Away with him! For then its better to destroy the canvas. But a good color is infinitely safer – you can paint anything with that– anything! I am onto the tricks of the two Gallos – theirs and Belmont's!"

He stood up, shoved his cap over his head.

"The ocean is becoming black," he said. "The sun is turning green. We should go swimming."

They swam far out, easily and quickly, and the current tore at them.

"Can you still see the land?" Asked the painter.

He shook his head. "The waves are too high," he answered. "We better go back."

They turned around.

But the ocean pulled them out. They had to paddle, paddle.

And the ocean became thick, slimy, and solid. He noticed, how he remained behind, more with every push, stroke, and how the other was swimming way ahead of him toward the land.

"Wait for me!" He cried.

Yet the other replied: "No! – I am a deserter."

Then he screamed through the black waves: "Coward!"

The One with the cap stood on the beach. He laughed: "Qué quiere? – Ich habe more travailliert für das Vaterland als Sie! – Plus que dreitausend horses!"

And he saw, that it was the stable hand, who disappeared into the rocks. Not the painter.

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The black was ink. Or – not exactly ink. It was a black colored, slimy substance, that dissolved in the water – and smelled bad like dead fish. And he had to swim in it.

Then he heard a moaning and coughing and gasping. He turned his head – the fat man was swimming there behind him. A pale, flesh colored,

and immense, splashing mass. He could scarcely recognize the face, saw only the small, greedy eyes, round little circles, saw the large hole – a horrible hole, that filled itself with water. The slimy black liquid streamed out from the fat man – from some gland, which emptied its disgusting contents into the ocean.

Then he also understood, why he could not go any further. The sticky ink held him firmly and at the same time the ocean streamed into the horrible mouthful – that was what pulled him backwards.

It was the fat man – there was no doubt about that. The face, which he saw, was entirely human – the skull was bald and flat. No forehead, no nose and no chin. Only the little, round eyes and the terrible gaping hole.

It was the fat man alright. Then his fingers grew and his toes grew, while his arms and legs drew into his body. And his neck inflated even more until head and body became one – a pale bladder, an enormous sack, that sucked in water. And his fingers and teeth writhed in the ocean, grew, became long, very long, many meters long. Then wide and thick like the strong man's arms, but soft and without bones. And covered with suckers everywhere.

He thought: 'That is why the painter swam away! It is a Kraken, the fat man, a large octopus! It wants to suck me dry –'

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Apparently he was not afraid – he lay there on his sofa – dreaming. Dreaming of a fat man – who was an octopus, and knew very well at the same time, that he was only dreaming. Yes he even knew, where the image came from. In an old issue of some magazine he had seen, in the "Jugend" or "Simplicissimus" just a few days ago. It was fat John Bull, who played the Kraken, with sucking tentacles stretching out across all the lands and the ocean. He remembered distinctly, that he had really disliked the illustration and had been angry at the illustrator, who had drawn the same old waltz for the hundredth time.

It was cheap, very cheap. It had been a good joke, the first time an artist had the idea, perhaps for Napoleon or Carl the fifth or some other person, who wanted to plunder the world. But today it was old, and had long become cliché for a hundred years and more.

It fit – really fit. But that was exactly why it was so bad, because it always fit. Just like heart and pain go together – like green is the color of hope and a beautiful women's voice like the song of a nightingale. Like Rouge et Noir; means play, and two times two equals four.

Convention –

Brilliant once, tasteless after that, and unbearable in the end.

And he thought: There is only one thing that is really wrong; this grisly, horrible and wholesome human common sense; that and nature –nature the most.

Every autumn leaves fall from the trees, they become bare. Then it snows and everything becomes white. Then in April or May it all becomes green again. Everywhere you look leaves and blossoms are bursting forth –

Why is it always just blossoms and green leaves? The same, eternally the same through the centuries and every year –every single year – always and eternally the same!

Nothing at all is possible other than this miserable, tacky, monotony of nature. The human rabble are just as tacky as well. They sit at the piano, tear their mouths open wide and sing like bells, or what should sound that way, but is barely recognizable.

It is a crime, that's what it is.

Why couldn't an apple tree have an original thought just once? Why couldn't it sprout corkscrews instead of those eternal green leaves, just once grow herring instead of white blossoms? God, it could create whatever it wanted to, hedgehogs, ink wells, beer glasses, tea cups, old boots or even toothbrushes! But no, no, it always has to be green leaves! Lilacs on a lilac bush, cherries on a cherry tree and currants on a currant bush!

And every rabbit has little rabbits. Every cat has her kittens, every cow has her calf! Why can't –there be a little variety, only just once –something different – even if it is just a tin chamber pot!

And now this despicable convention has crawled into his dreams.

"He thought "you don't need mescal for that –

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Fear? – Not really. It fit – certainly – he was German. And the English pursued him – like everyone else in the entire country – he could see that

every day. That was why the detectives were there, lurking in front of his house door.

It fit – fit very well. He was being sucked dry – tired, sick and empty – and something was there, that sucked him dry. He swam, swam in the black muck – swam and couldn't get anywhere.

He would never get back home – never reach the shore!

And yet he could see it – could see the shore – it was so near.

Then he felt himself split; there was two of him. One lay on the sofa and dreamed. And saw quite clearly how the other was miserably struggling in the black water. Saw how he threw his arms out wide and pushed with his legs against the current that was dragging him. And while the one knew very well, that it was dreaming, the other knew just as well, that everything around it was very real. That the horrible fat man was coming closer and closer, that the soft tentacles were reaching out very far, pale and soft, pushing through the slimy ink.

He shut his eyes, cried out, and swam, swam in miserable fear.

He came further, to the beach – ah, then he felt the ground under his feet.

He stood; and turned around. The monster was so close now, that all its arms waved around his body. And even though he had just reached the beach, he would never be able to reach the rocks, then the flood spewed forth.

He searched – for some stone – a stick – something with which to defend himself.

Then he felt something in his hand – small and shiny.

Lotte's knife –

He opened it – then it grew – like the sucking tentacles of the fat man. And he hacked around him, hitting an arm with the sharp blade. Cut through it – and it writhed in the water – like a large snake. He grabbed it again, and again hacked at it – and his good knife cut through it like butter.

Red blood mixed with the black ocean. In between swam the pale tentacles.

He ran. Fell down, right in the rocks, on a little spot of sand, just wide enough, for him to stretch out on.

He lay there. Looking at the ocean.

He saw the fat man – who grinned at him. Slurping water, lots of water – splashing, then diving underneath. But the white arm swam in the bloody

ink – sinking down, then coming back up – as if it had a life of its own. It came closer and closer to the beach.

One tentacle lifted up – and reached. The water flowed black under the white body – but he saw, that it was hair, wet waves of deep black hair. And it was not a tentacle – it was a female, a naked female.

There was still something there in back of it– still something – again something. The white tentacles were trying to get to the naked female.

She came up, crawled up to him. Silent – silent – without any sound. Closer, closer –

He tried to stand up, tried to scream. He tore his mouth wide open –

But no sound came out. Nothing.

He lay there helpless. Without sound. Without moving.

Only the sound of breathing. Only a beating in his heart. – Then he closed his eyes.

And he felt, how she touched him. Wet, cold – in the middle of his chest. A pain, piercing – very quick, just for a second.

And then long sucking and slurping.

She drank him dry – she drank him dry.

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It didn't hurt – no. It was pleasant. Soft and pleasant. And it seemed, as if he was sucking too – like the female. As if he was drinking – like she was. He felt the taste of blood on his tongue. Sweet –

Also felt, how his veins filled with blood. How he became strong and healthy.

And they both drank – him – her, the female.

She was an extension of the fat man, a tentacle, that had won its own life, become a creature, this Shakti of the terrible Shiva. She sucked his blood – and he was only dreaming. In a death rattle, in the last convulsions of death.

Dreaming – that he was sucking blood – drinking himself fat and full. He fell asleep. Dreaming again.

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It was in the garden, behind his mother's house. School vacation – his cousin Daisy was visiting. He played with her in the early morning under the chestnut trees. She had a very large tin plate, had filled it with water, and placed it in the sun – then the tame Jackdaws came and bathed. They dove around, spraying the water with their wings, and picked at the shiny metal with their sharp beaks. She also had a guinea pig, whose name was "Enkel" and two hedgehogs – they had to bathe as well.

Then a voice cried out – clear and loud: "Dé –si –rée!"

That was aunt Ida, Daisy's mother. Now playtime was over. Now she had to go inside, and take up the quill. Sit down and write an essay in French about Mohammed or one in English about the Virgin of Orleans. And then play the piano – for at least three hours. And then another hour – playing cards with his mother.

She was a good two years younger than he was. And knew so much and could do so much – that came about, because her mother wanted to make a miracle child out of her.

Really, she was average at swimming. Couldn't take a toad in her hand, and didn't even know what a splick was! And she was afraid of dead sparrows unless they were wrapped in newspaper.

Daisy left, and he sat alone, thinking for a long time. About the toads – that was a very difficult case! The hedgehogs caught them, threw them onto their backs, bit their bellies open and ate the eggs. Then let them lie there. Now he was certainly not afraid of a toad – but one, that lay on its back, that had its belly torn open and its eggs and intestines eaten – that was something else. You couldn't really stomp on it – and yet you needed to kill it! Cut off its head with a sharp knife – that was certainly the quickest solution for the dying animal, to ease its suffering. He had done that once – it was terribly difficult. You had to close your eyes – and cut at the same time.

What else could a person do? He liked the toads, because of their golden eyes. He also liked the hedgehogs – because of their clever cheeks and their little paws and their prickly hair. And because they gave birth to little ones, that right from the start, looked like prickly chestnuts.

Really the hedgehogs were untrainable, they didn't listen, to what you told them. They broke into the henhouse and ate the eggs. They chewed on every pear that fell from the trees, and even ate their own children.

One of them must be destroyed – the toad or the hedgehog. The hedgehogs were so terribly funny. And in the end they couldn't really help that they liked to eat fresh toad eggs. He loved to eat the green gooseberries, that he had to steal from in back of the cloister garden – and that was also forbidden.

He couldn't find any answer. He went out onto the veranda, and waited there for breakfast.

Aunt Henrietta brought him coffee, as she always did when she visited. The coffee pot looked exactly like aunt Henrietta, fat, round, with no neck and dressed in blue and white. And it was so friendly and good, exactly like aunt Henrietta. But he thought: it is all a trick. There was a thick skin floating in his cup – which he couldn't get out. He fished for it – but aunt Henrietta put it back again. That was the best part – she said. And he should thank God, that he was always able to have such good cream in his coffee.

What did she know about it, aunt Henrietta? For his sake she wanted to fill his belly with cream until it was as fat and round as she was. He – didn't care for that! And the coffee pot was a damaged thing, that had poured this skin into his cup.

He moved around uncomfortably; then aunt Henriette asked, when was he finally going to get to work? "His grades were miserable, he had large holes in his mathematical skills to fill in –"

He stood up. and then Snuck quickly into the garden, when his aunt took up her knitting. He left his cup untouched, and only took his bread along with.

She was common, and round, aunt Henrietta, he thought. Common and lame, like the stupid coffee pot, which she had brought with her.

School vacation! – And Daisy still had to write French essays about Mohammed! And he was supposed to fill in the holes in his mathematical skills! And the old hedgehog ate the eggs out of living toads –

He sighed deeply. Oh – that was life –

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He lay there like the poor toad, on his back in the rocks. Only it was not a hedgehog, that dug its sharp teeth into his body. It was the coffee can, that sucked with its short snout. And then it was nothing other, than aunt

Henriette herself – that drank, that slurped – that was how she had become so fat and round.

And she had also sucked out the toads, at the edge of the path – he had been wrong about the hedgehogs – now it was all clear! It was her – or the fat octopus, that had crawled out of the ocean during the night and over the cloister wall, into the garden.

Or perhaps it was this tentacle? – This naked female?

In any case, that's what he was. He was the toad. That and the other as well. Both. He lay there with a torn open body – staring helplessly into the sun with golden green eyes –

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Then little mice crawled all over him. The black ones which the man had spit out in the Pullman car of the Union Pacific, between Salt Lake City and Denver. That had jumped out from the spittoon, and they sat around him, whistling and peeping.

Chittering, even chattering, singing –

It was a mouse song, from the mouse Prince, who had wanted to travel across the ocean in a teapot. Travel to Rotterdam. But he never got there, because he was from Beverland, and that was in Germany.

– They poked their tails into his open toad's body. And licked at it.

But they didn't like it – not at all.

They let him lie there.

The nuns came through the garden; they found the poor toad. They pushed with pointed fingers at a large chestnut leaf, and covered the other with it, carried it away, marching through the garden, slowly and praying, then around the courtyard. Where it was to be buried.

And he thought: how good it would be, to lie there. Right by the water, where the little green frog had jumped down into the heavens. By the fourth column, under all the white roses.

– He stood in the cloister, in the middle between the nuns. But they didn't see him, they were so occupied with praying and singing. And he thought: now they will bury the empty leaf – and won't know, that the little toad was not inside it –

Then he saw, that it was not the Rhinish nuns, not the abbess Beata, not the Dalwigk, not the sweet Metternich and the little Romberg with the pug nose.

It was Miss Pierpont and Miss Fox and Andre's thin chorus girls. They chanted a song, horribly, in syncopated ragtime, an Anglicized hacked up Latin; throwing down roses from the balcony but they didn't know, how very red the roses were – blood red roses – blood –

Blood drained down, dropped over him, lots of red blood. It crawled out from his tongue down onto his lips, like it had once at a duel. And he licked, slurped – blood, warm blood –

He was thirsty – very thirsty –

Drank – drank –

He drank himself healthy, so strong and healthy.

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Doctor Samuel Cohen stood there. He said: "Take hemoglobin. Doctor Hommel's hemoglobin. It is concentrated blood, horse's blood. The affect is amazing. A spoonful of hemoglobin holds more –"

He stared at him, first without understanding and confused. Then he understood.

"No, Doctor," he said. "No! It must be red and warm and fresh. Must be human blood. And it must be flowing, flowing!"

At that the doctor shook his head, very thoughtfully and reproachfully: "That is a solid rope for the net, in which you are stuck! You can't make any rope out of hemoglobin. Doctor Hommel's hemoglobin is available in every apothecary. It –"

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He wasn't listening – and the doctor could see. So he interrupted himself, shrugged his shoulders, and left. There was a whispering at the door and a heavy pushing and shoving. Someone stood there in a blue uniform, with silver buttons, but without a hat. He let the doctor out.

And let another one inside. It was the journalist, Tewes.

“How are you feeling, doctor?” He asked.

How did he feel? What a question! Outstanding, strong, powerful, and very healthy.

“Would you like some tea?” He asked the editor.

“Tea – tea here?” The other replied.

He looked around – No, he was not in his room. It was a cell, narrow, very small – with moist, muggy air. Without windows and dark enough – only an electric lightbulb glowed from out of one corner. He sat on a bunk – and his hands were handcuffed together.

He knew the cell very well. This is where he had visited the sick Burade, from the North German ‘Lloyd’. Burade had helped a couple of people crossover back to Germany with false passports, and had been sentenced for seven years and sent to Atlanta in the state penitentiary.

But – but yet, now he himself was sitting here – who knew for how long already! In this miserable, dirty hole, in the “tombs”, of the New York Court prison –

“I have brought some newspapers with me,” said the editor, Laying a large bundle on the bunk. “All the clippings about the case! The entire press is unanimous in their praise for the prosecutor that has convicted you and in doing so has saved this country.”

“Have you been convicted as well?” He asked.

The journalist laughed “Me? – How can they convict me? I am an American!”

He opened up the bundle, and took out a couple of clippings. “I have just come from your attorney – He has received a telegram from Washington. The Supreme Court has rejected your appeal – has affirmed the charges of the prosecutor in all one hundred and seventeen points.”

“So – so,” he thought, “one hundred and seventeen points!”

The journalist continued: “The execution shall take place tonight. I think, it would help, if you would receive your colleagues, the reporters and photographers – perhaps that would console you a little bit. You are the most interesting person in all of the New York today, Doctor, over sixty press people are waiting outside. Shall I let them in?”

“Just a moment,” he said.

He reached for the newspaper clippings, and stared at them. Oh, yes he remembered the entire case very well, how the court prosecutor had looked

as he gave his closing speech. He had been short of breath, gasping for air, and spitting after each sentence –

He had perpetrated a hundred and seventeen crimes, large and small, just like it said. Many of them only once, several regressions and again some that were entirely coincidental with the others –

And the judge had said: “It almost appears, as if the entire life of this man while in our free and open country has been nothing other than a continuous non-observance and side stepping of the law. As if this infinitely low, animalistic being, possessed by Satan – in one word: this German – can think of nothing other than murder, robbery, thievery, and crimes of any type.”

There they were in the newspaper, counted out, one after the other, his one hundred and seventeen misdeeds – an entire page full.

Falsification of documents – that was just one point. But almost one thousand individual cases. False passports, all kinds of papers, false declaration of contraband, and smuggling contraband to Germany. Dishonoring the flag – he had remained sitting on his bench at Madison square, when a passing organ grinder had played the ‘Star-Spangled Banner’ on his organ. “White slavery” – dealing in girls, because he, for the purpose of indecency, had slipped an American citizen into a foreign state. – Oh yes, it was all true! He had traveled with Lotte van Ness from New York across to her country Manor in New Jersey – exactly 40 minutes with the automobile.

Then betrayal of the country – he had stirred up Pancho Villa, and delivered weapons to him: a whole five revolvers! He alone had convinced the Japanese, to take a stance against the United States – they were convinced of it! Dishonoring the president, whom he had called a lackey of England in his speeches. And he had vilified England itself, the holy motherland – that was much worse.

Disobeyed public moralities – he had danced on the beach, with only swimming trunks, and without a T-shirt. A detective had observed it through a telescope – he would swear to it. And blasphemed, profaned God! Because he had maintained, that the tribe of Levi had flown the black, white and red flag in the desert. But the tribes of Israel in the wilderness were divinely ordained, and it was a low down sacrilege, to maintain, that one of them flew the murderous flag of Germany. There was nothing about it in the Bible. It was a deeply pathetic, low down, German falsification.

And then – the case with the red and yellow flag. It was completely unreasonable, that a flag could blow against the wind, that was against the most simple laws of nature – only a German could talk about such foolishness in an American court of justice. There was no question at all, that it had something to do with some secret message, with espionage, some infamous spy, that he participated in while on this path like his child murdering countrymen. Like he also, evaded postal regulations and disregarded the high law of the United States, by sending letters to Europe via neutral passage to get them to Germany. In the same way the casting of a long, black shadow exactly at noon, that – was entirely impossible according to nature's laws and for that reason alone would be enough to damn any decent person –It could serve no other purpose, than to communicate with his compatriots in some secret way.

And the toad! The one that had been bitten open while it was still living, in order to slurp out the eggs from its body; that was terrible animal torture, a truly devilish cruelty, a genuine German barbarism! The same thing with his foolish speech. Had the defendant ever seen any hedgehog eating eggs from the body of a living toad? Naturally not! And even more stupid were the assumptions of the accused, that perhaps it had been the coffee pot, or his aunt Henrietta, or even the mysterious fat man! All of that was genuine lunacy! But if the criminal imagined, that the court would fall for such silly assumptions, would believe for even one second, if he was pretending to be crazy, he was very badly mistaken. He was not crazy at all – as much as it was possible for a German to be sane! Neither hedgehogs nor aunts nor coffee pots could perpetrate such fearful cruelties – but his true criminal nature was completely revealed in its entire terrible offensiveness. It was a genuine master example of German civilization!"

And finally the horrible murder of the fat old gentleman – and his daughter, whom he had cut up and sucked dry. The statement of the accused, that he had been attacked by this family on the ocean beach and had been sucked dry himself, was completely a cheeky lie. As was everything the accused had ever stated before this court. He had been sucked dry? Yes, how then? He stood there in the full bloom of health! While the family of the fat gentleman was nowhere to be found. And that brought up the possibility, that this family was an American family – or English! As long as the earth turned, such as a crime had never been perpetrated – leave it to a German to come up with something like that!

For that he gets –

He let his hand sink, laid the paper next to him on the bunk. What now, what now? – How should he answer such accusations?

Tonelessly he asked the editor: “What was my sentence?”

The other looked at him with wide open eyes.

“You don’t know? – To death naturally!”

He repeated: “To death – naturally! By electric chair!”

But Tewes laughed. “You have lost your senses, doctor! No trace of an electric chair! You are to receive the same type of death, that you brought to the fat gentleman. Do you remember, how the judge with such Puritan, genuine American regard pronounced, that man should return to the old simplicity of the holy lands – that this criminal must be made an example of for all Germans perpetrating such crimes! Return from modern sophistication back to the old pious biblical belief: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! You are to be sucked dry in an electromechanical way; a metal helmet will be used for this purpose. Look at the newspaper – pictures of the machine are shown everywhere – it runs on the old Baunscheidt system.”

He shook his head unwillingly. “Nonsense! The electric chair is the means of death! That is the law in the state of New York!”

Tewes grabbed the newspaper, and held it under his nose. “Read it, read it, if you don’t want to believe me! – They have changed the law, have created a new one – one just for your case. Just yesterday the bill went through the Congress of the United States, read about it!”

He looked in the pages – it was true, it really was. He nodded, then sighed and said “They can sure pass laws fast in Albany!”

The journalist opined: “Yes, yes – you must give that to us Americans: we can pass laws.”

– Then he heard voices at the door and a rustling and shaking at the lock and bar. “It is your colleagues,” cried Tewes. “The photographers and reporters! – Let them in – do me a favor! It doesn’t really matter to you, what you do in these final hours!”

He said: “It doesn’t matter – it doesn’t matter! Only – please excuse me – I can’t write with these tight handcuffs. You take the quill – I would like to dictate a couple of lines – to my mother –”

But the editor shook his head. “Lost time – lost effort, Doctor – we would never be able to get the letter over there! I will collect all the

newspaper clippings about the case and execution; collect them and put them into an album – and we can get that to her later. Then the old lady will have some beautiful memories."

He jumped up – suddenly – and ran to the door.

"It is not the journalists, Doctor!" He cried. "It is – it is –"

Then he was seized with fear. "Who is it? Who" he asked.

And Tewes answered: "The – the people – that want to take you!"

Already?" He cried. "Already? Now?" He heard the noise, and distinguished individual voices as well. Something was not right at the door, they pushed and acted as if they wanted to bash the door in, he heard the hinges groan. They still held – they still held!

He wanted to jump up, and brace himself against the door, but he couldn't rise. He wanted to scream – and his lips gave no sound. His entire body shuddered, trembled miserably, and pressed his hands fast together.

"Holy virgin," he whispered. "The most sweetest virgin! Mother of God –"

Something prayed inside him:

"Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animaae donetur,
Tui Nati visio."

The stammered prayer became a soft chanting. It came out of him, and he heard how it resounded in the room, in him and around him.

"Post virtutem Nati tui
Ora, ut electi sui
Ad patriam veniant!"

"Back," he whispered, "back! To the fatherland, home – to my mother's house. To my mother Maria –"

Then a loud hammer blow smashed at the lock. Then another and a third. The sweat of fear ran from his temples. He stared at the weakening door. Tore at them, tore at the handcuffs, with inhuman power – and they fell clattering down –

And he grabbed the knife, that lay at his side.

“Let them come!” He snarled. “Let them come! I’ll take one with me – one – and perhaps more!”

Then the hinges howled, the old door cracked, and fell heavily into the room. Then he jumped up –

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A click – and bright light everywhere. Blinding him –

Lotte van Ness stood in front of him and Ernst Rossius. Behind them was the old servant. He silently lifted up the small table that had been tipped over, collected the shards of the teapot and broken cups.

Frank Braun let his arm sink – something fell out of his fingers; Fred picked it up from the carpet, laid it on the little table. It was Lotte’s little knife.

She saw it right away. She reached her hand out, but didn’t pick it up. She stared at him, with open lips, then turned her gaze away, and looked around the room. And saw, the Frau lying stretched out in the leather easy chair. Her head lay on the arm of the chair, and her left arm hung down. Her dress was open at her breasts.

In an instant Lotte was by her, bending over the sleeping woman. She screamed – shrill and piercing. Then came back to the sofa, took up the knife, and lifted it high.

“I knew it!” She cried. “I knew it.”

Frank Braun reached into the sleeve of his kimono, pulled out a handkerchief, and wiped the sweat from his neck and face. “What, Lotte, what?” He asked.

But she didn’t answer. She stood again by the sleeping woman, and straightened out her dress. “Lift her up!” She commanded. Take her out of here! To my car!”

Rossius lifted the dancer up, placed her feet on the floor. Then pulled her into a standing position, with the help of the servant. The Goyita stood, trembled, staggered – but she stood. The blue eyes opened wide, she murmured a couple of incoherent words. Threatened to fall again, shut her eyelids again, and allowed herself to be led out by the two of them.

Lotte van Ness stepped over to him. Her lips moved; she wanted to say something and couldn’t find the words. Her fingers played nervously with

the little knife. Her narrow fingers.

“You,” she whispered, “you –”

But she could not continue. A heavy sob tore through her breast, wild tears broke out of her eyes.

He made a movement to her. “What is it, Lotte?”

She shook her head. Then turned around sharply, and went out, without a word.

He listened. He heard her footsteps. Heard her voice from the street. And the roar of the departing auto.

What had happened?

Then his secretary came back – and ran immediately to the ringing telephone.

“Yes! Yes!” He cried. “We’re coming immediately! – We are all ready, yes! – In ten minutes the Doctor will be on the stage. – Most certainly, yes!”

He hung up the receiver. Called the old servant, who had just entered, and told him to get a taxi cab immediately. Then turned to Frank Braun.

“It is high time, Doctor!” He said. “Past 9 o’clock! You must get dressed – how do you feel?”

How did he feel? – He took a couple of steps, flexed his muscles. Herr God, he felt so healthy, like he had not felt for months!

He undressed in a moment, and jumped under the cold shower, while young Rossius got his jacket ready, shirt, tie, and shoes. “That was a pretty story,” he laughed. “Frau van Ness will really be jealous! Finding a strange lady here with you – sleeping, and with an open dress at that. – Was she pretty? I scarcely saw her face in all the excitement.”

Frank Braun didn’t answer, rubbed himself down, and grabbed the shirt. “Why the devil did you break down the door?” He asked.

“Why?” Answered the secretary. “Because it was locked! – Just a minute – there is a button missing in back! So – here’s your waistcoat! – We stood for over half an hour in front of your door, and called, screamed, bellowed, beat and kicked with hands and feet! And no answer – only every now and then we heard a groaning and moaning. – We thought, that God knows what happened to you!”

“I fell asleep,” said Frank Braun. “All the time since you left. – and dreamed stupid stuff. – How did Frau van Ness get here?”

“Her auto arrived, just as I entered the house,” replied Rossius. “I thought, that she came here, to pick you up. – Here is the vest! And don’t

forget the trouser buttons – one of them is open! That looks bad during a speech!”

He helped him into the jacket, then into his coat. “Quick, quick!” He cried, “the taxi is waiting downstairs!”

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The large hall at Terrace garden was packed full: they were already singing, two thousand voices, the song of Prince Eugene.

“Interlude!” Said the chairman, who welcomed him at the door to the Hall.

“To the honor of our Austrian colleagues! – Come along, Doctor, it is high time!”

He was led to the table of honor, right in front under the stage, right next to the blaring music. Frank Braun shook hands with the gentlemen that were sitting there, they were the honored guests during this time, almost evening after evening, and in jackets and white ties. The consulate, the president of the large workers union, the captains of the Hapag and Lloyd, the large steamers.

“To your health, gentlemen!” He cried, emptying a large glass of champagne.

He felt so young, so light and happy. And he sang with them, his voice ringing out in the large hall:

“Prince Eugene, always for the just,
fighting like the lion, like the general and field marshal,
Prince Ludwig, who rode up and down:
remain true to your German brothers,
bring only sorrow to the enemy!”

The last sounds receded, and the chairman stood up. And no, he had to give his speech immediately. He considered, and organized his thoughts.

“Excuse me, Captain,” he turned to his neighbor, “please hand me your program. I need to know, what I should talk about.”

“Yes, that would be good!” Granted the Captain, picking up the piece of paper. “It says: “Us and the Fatherland.”

Yes certainly, that was it. The society had picked this theme especially for him. And he had also prepared, just yesterday, for at least half an hour. But he had completely forgotten the thread, didn't remember any more, other than just the words, with which he wanted to close – a couple of verses from Grabbe.

"I must end there," he thought. I must start from someplace else. Oh, he would get there.

He climbed up onto the stage, he nodded, and thanked all sides for the applause. Then he began.

He was happy and light. And for the first time he enjoyed himself, enjoyed that he stood there in front of thousands, and that he spoke.

He spoke very quickly today, much faster than usual. Almost too fast, without pauses, one sentence hitting against the next. But also more simply, without phrases, very easy and natural. And yet he could feel, how all the people went along with him, how they eagerly drank in every word.

At other speeches he wrestled with the animal down there below, the many headed beast. Tamed it, forced it to his will. Held it in his spell with all his nerves.

Today it was different. He didn't fight. He didn't wait for any reaction, gave himself up to it, without any of the speaker's tricks. He laid every skill to the side, and didn't consider anything.

Today it was, as if something, the things that he spoke, didn't come out from him. As if he were only the mouth, only the single voice of a thousand people. Oh yes, that was it: he was the voice of their soul.

He was speaking aloud.

He believed in the homeland, believed on his mother's house, believed on the Fatherland. Believed solidly on it, that they all – he and those down there below in the audience, were brothers and sisters – all of one blood – German blood –

And he raised, for the first time in his speech, raised his voice, as he spoke the closing words, trembling in passionate conviction. As the soul of the German people resounded out of him rejoicing in the hall:

"Oh, no thunder in heaven and no sound on earth, can pour from the most beautiful, sweetest lips, more powerfully than the word: Fatherland!"

In that moment he believed. He believed it inwardly and powerfully. Lifted his voice one more time rejoicing – "Fatherland!" – And then the third time: "Fatherland!"

And the women and men down below believed like he did, felt like he did. They stood up – screaming, rejoicing in the sacred word: “Fatherland!”

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He quickly went offstage, to where Rossius waited with his coat. Then left quickly. They went through the back entrance to the street. “Where do you want to go, doctor?” Asked his secretary.

He considered. “We could eat dinner – perhaps at –”

But then he interrupted himself. “No – no. I have to do something. – Till morning then!” He shook hands with the other, and slowly went over the street to a taxi.

He climbed in. “Park Avenue, the corner of 53rd St.!” He cried to the chauffeur.

That was Lotte Lewis’s house. – He must see her tonight.

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He waited in the library. Went up and down with long strides. “Finally she came, greeted him lightly, and motioned for him to take a seat.

“Well?” He asked.

“Well?” She said. “What – what now? Should I be giving you an explanation?”

He drummed with his fingers on the table. “As you will, Lotte. But in any case there is nothing, that I want to hide from you. – Will you tell me, why you arrived so suddenly?”

She laughed out loud. “You can easily answer that for yourself. I expected you around six, and you didn’t come. I knew, that you had been sick – so I phoned around seven. I sat with the receiver in my hand for three quarters of an hour – the operator tried to do what she could for me. You had disconnected your phone.”

“No,” he said, “it was not disconnected. I was asleep, I didn’t hear it.”

“Then you must have been very fast asleep, my friend!” She cried. “It was ringing uninterrupted! – By the way this afternoon you told me a different story.”

He nodded. “Yes, Lotte, I know that. I lied – this afternoon. I lay there and was very tired. And the ringing of the phone tormented me – when I spoke with you, I had only a feeling: to be done as quickly as possible. So I only said: yes and no – wanted to have no questions and give no long answers. That’s why I lied – and hung up.”

“And now?” She asked.

“Now it’s the truth,” he replied. “I didn’t hear. I was asleep.”

She sighed softly. “It could be – I almost believe, that it is the truth. Anyway, you didn’t answer – I was uncomfortable with that. Waited again – and called back later. Finally I commanded my auto – to drive here. I found the secretary in front of your door – he had just broken down the door to the room – which you had locked. You know the rest.”

“Where is the girl?” He asked.

She raised her hand. “She’s lying in back, in the guest bedroom. My maid is with her – she is still sleeping. The doctor just left – he said, she must have taken a very strong intoxicant – but he doesn’t know, what it was.”

He nodded. “Yes, yes, she took mescal. Two large cups full – just like I did.” – He explained to her, that she was the Spanish dancer, of whom he had told her about. The one from the fever ship, which he had met up with again in Torreon, with Pancho Villa. He told her the little episode, when he had tried in vain, to find some mescal buttons, how the Goyita had promised, to find some for him. She had come that afternoon – entirely unexpected – just as he had finished talking with her on the telephone. She had brought the cactus fruit with her for him – he had believed, that perhaps it would help him. – By the way he was certainly not wrong: he felt so healthy now as he had rarely felt.

Lotte van Ness laughed out loud. “So completely healthy!” She cried “I believe that! – So that’s why you cooked the stuff up and drank it! And gave the seniorita some of it at the same time – presumably she was curious, to try it right?”

“It is really so,” he answered, “exactly like that! She had heard so much talk about mescal intoxication there in Mexico, and wanted to try it. And, God knows, Lotte – she had more trust in me then you!”

She ridiculed: “Oh, a rock solid trust! Which you completely justified! – I know, I know!”

He became annoyed, stood up, took a couple of steps. “I give you my word, Lotte, I have not touched her.”

“You lie!” She cried quickly.

He stood there in front of her, and repeated seriously: “Lotte, I have not touched her.”

“Then she opened her dress herself!” She said scornfully.

“Yes!” He replied. “Before we fell asleep – on the sofa I, she on the chair – I told her, that she should make her neck and breasts free, so that she could breathe easier. She did it. – Whether you now believe or not: I did not get out of my sofa, and did not touch her in all that time. I didn’t even shake hands with her, when she entered.”

But Lotte shook her head. “And yet you are lying!” She walked over to the table, searched around, took out the little knife, and handed it to him. He opened it – the blade showed thick, dark stains.

“It’s dirty,” he said. What are these stains?”

“Those are bloodstains!” She spoke. “Now do you see, that you lied!”

He breathed deeply, and carefully kept control of himself.

“The devil take your stupid sorcery!” He cried, tossing the blade into the fireplace. ““Today this thing has lied to you twice! I will tell you something, Lotte, at the night Festival of the Moon Ladies I betrayed you. Took Aimée Breitauer. Or: she took me – as you might say! In any case: your little knife remained bright and shiny – and then you were certain of my innocence. And yet, as true as I stand before you now, I took her.”

“What is that to me!” She cried. Contemptuously, indifferently. But he didn’t listen. “And it is exactly the opposite today.” He continued. “This time I really am innocent – but your little knife is stained with blood! – Are you jealous.”

She took it up. “Jealous? Do you know what this is about, do you? I know all about it – you have taught me through fifteen long years! When I can’t sleep – when I’m sitting there – one night – then another night – so many nights. Always just thinking – always thinking – about –”

She sat down, burying her head in her hands, moaning. Then she lifted herself again with a jerk, and threw her head back. “Jealous? Oh yes – of everything, that you do! But not any more jealous of some woman in the world than of the glass, that you touch to your lips, the shirt, that you take off – the bath, in which you climb! – And there is only one thing, just one thing – which I want, which is mine alone – just one thing!”

Her fingers dug into the soft arm of the chair, and bending forward. She said: “You took – from another – today – which you should have only taken – from me.”

He stood in front of her, lowering his voice.

“Look, Lotte,” he began, “why should I lie? I told you about the other, but you didn’t want to believe. I didn’t take the seniorita –.”

She snapped at him. “Who was talking about that?” She cried. “That you didn’t take her – believe me – I know that better – then you do yourself!”

He didn’t understand. “What do you mean?” He asked.

She pulled back her lips, and then contemptuously shrugged her shoulders. “It was a whim – I had her examined by my doctor. His report was: Virgo intacta!”

He stared at her, completely without understanding. “Yes – but, Lotte – what is it? How did I lie to you then? – And what is it – what do you need from me?”

She passed her hand wearily over her forehead. Whether you took her – or not – what does that matter? Whether you take anyone – that crosses your path – what is that to me? – Be silent, silent – you have done it before – did it again today! Only it, only it – it hurts me, when I hear about it, oh yes – it still does! But you have made me accustomed to such pain, you! It passes; I kiss you laughingly, and you don’t notice, how much it hurts me: that is what you have taught me! But this – this is something else!”

“What is it, Lotte?” He asked.

It rang bitterly. “You have two good eyes – that can see so clearly – and yet you are so blind! The little knife there, that glows in the fire – it doesn’t lie – didn’t lie! It spoke the truth – told me everything, that you did!”

She rose up quickly, then stepped up to him. “Look,” she began again, “I will tell you what it is! it is the highest thing that a woman can do for the man, whom she loves, a mother for her only child, a saint for the suffering of humanity – that is what you taught me to do – the most high, the most sacred gift of all – and then you go, and take it from someone else – the first woman that crosses your path! And even from someone that doesn’t even know what is happening! And if she – if she knew about it – would spit on you! That is what it is all about!”

He heard every word – and still didn’t understand. “Tell me again, Lotte,” he pleaded. “A little more clearly –”

But she tiredly shook her head. “No, no, it is no use. You will not understand! – Perhaps another time!”

He took her hand, and caressed it. “Try again! Today! Other days I am often so tired, drained, weak – like my brain and veins have been emptied out. But today I am so clear and fresh – I feel so strong and healthy.

At that she tore herself loose, and stepped quickly back. A sob seized her breast, and she broke out in violent sobs. “Strong?” She cried. “Healthy? – From what?”

He said: “I think, the tea helped me – the mescal tea, I mean.”

With a wild hysterical cry she turned on him: “The mescal? –” She screamed. “It was the blood – the blood!”

She quickly walked past him, and tears fell over her pale cheeks. But her mouth laughed: “You fool, you fool – you three times blind fool!”

She left him standing there, and disappeared through the door.

Chapter Eleven: Diamonds

And for that reason, resplendent on the Prince's hand,
is a diamond, large as the egg of a dove,
so that its radiant, sun like brilliance
strikes the hard hearts, that beat in a circle

around the old Minareh
so that it melts them,
like the sun melts the mountain snow.
They are the same. Allah gave
Such power to this stone.
-Nisami

Little Ivy Jefferson knew what she was doing when she laid her clever little net. She soon found out that the Spanish dancer had been with him and that Frau van Ness had discovered him with her. Then she had also known for a long time, what he had done at the festival of the Moon Ladies and that he was now in Aimée Breitauer's famous book. There was also something to do with Farstin – director Andre had dropped a hint about that.

She had tried to let him go – and tried honestly for a couple of long weeks – but then she called him up again, when she could not find any other man, that she liked better. She needed thrills, like her mother, like all the women in her society, and there was something about this German, that made her nostrils flare.

Love? Oh no – it was a whim. She just wanted him – and was accustomed, to have her own way, since she was able to think. Her logic was so simple: she was growing up, was in high society, had been for half a year. Now she would get married. To him naturally. He was the one who talked to her more than any of the others. And she would not have to share him with other women. Perhaps she would find what she was searching for – oh she didn't even know, what it was. Perhaps it would be him – that would be good. And if not – she could get a divorce – nothing was easier. She could have anybody she wanted, she, Howard J Jefferson's only daughter.

He saw through it clearly. Whenever possible he avoided being along with her. He developed a genius for excuses and alibis.

"You are the worst mannered beau in New York!" She said.

"Why don't you search for another!" He laughed.

She whistled – she could whistle so beautifully, like a street boy. That he didn't do what she wanted, never, never; that was the one thing that intrigued her. There were still other women. Several, which she knew about – several others as well, that she didn't know about. But she would soon find out – she would.

He had another reason to avoid being alone with her. It was not really a reason, just a feeling – a fearful instinct. Something had happened that afternoon, when the Goyita had visited him. He was afraid, without even being aware of it, to be alone and in some room with a woman – whoever it was. To go dating yes – to go for a drive in the auto yes – to go to lunch somewhere or to the theater. Any place where people were around – there he was safe. But even walking alone in the garden with blonde Ivy was uncomfortable for him. A vague fear, that something could happen – a fear of her – of himself – he didn't know what it was.

She noticed as well. She made a game of it to take every opportunity, where she could be alone with him. Her mother helped her, always trying, whenever possible, to leave them alone – in return, Ivy helped her with her beau, the Consul General. For a while she tried to compromise herself with him. She kissed him, just as her mother entered or one of the other servants came in. And then even in front of strangers. But he acted, as if it were all a childish game, the playfulness of a foolish little kitten. Once her mother asked him bluntly.

"When someone comes to the house as often as you do," she said, "and is always together with my daughter, then it is expected, that he will ask for her hand."

He looked at her, then laughed over at Ivy.

"Is that so?" He said. And not a further word.

"Yes!" Stressed Frau Alice.

"For everyone. That is the custom with us."

"Not with me," he replied.

You completely refuse to ask her?" She cried. Her indignation was genuine and not forced; she stood up from the breakfast table very much offended.

"I most certainly will not!" He cried after her. Ivy scarcely took the time to wait until her mother was out the door. "And how would you answer if I asked?" She asked. "Do you want to marry me?"

He acted, as if it was only a joke.

"No!" He said. "You don't want me for a husband anymore than I want you." He stood up quickly. "Get ready, Ivy, the auto is waiting. We were going for a drive in the country this afternoon."

This time she persisted. "But would you like me for a mistress?" She began again.

“No,” he laughed, “not for that either.” He tried to smile. “What would your parents say to that? Come now – stop being foolish.”

She remained sitting quietly, wagging her little chin back and forth. That was her favorite word: “Mistress”. She flirted with it, and always used it, never saying Frau van Ness, but calling her his mistress. She would say: “I saw your mistress today – on Fifth Avenue. Or when he came to visit: “Have you come from your mistress? When he left: “Greet your mistress for me!”

“She holds you tightly, your mistress,” she considered. “She will not let you go, that’s for sure! You are not permitted to do what you want, but must dance, when she pulls the strings – you are her little puppet.”

“Stupid chatter!” He cried.

She slowly got up, and walked over to him.

“I know, what I’m talking about,” she insisted. “I have thought it all out. Everything, that you do – your entire work – you do only, because that’s what she wants. And she only wants it – to always keep you busy – to never more be your own master, to not have any more time to think for yourself and of yourself. Look, I don’t even like to pick up a newspaper anymore – everywhere there is this terrible outcry for the Star-Spangled Banner! And the same way they shout for America – you shout for Germany, just the same way. Don’t you know this, that it is exactly just as foolish! I whistle at the Fatherland! I would ten times more rather live somewhere in the states or in Paris or London – presumably also in Berlin or Vienna, if I knew those cities. The Fatherland and all those other phrases are for the masses – not for us.”

He looked at her in astonishment. “But what is for us then?” He asked.

She said: “For us? – Life!”

He still refused to take her seriously.

“Tell me, Ivy,” he asked again. “Where did you get all this wisdom?”

“I read it,” she answered calmly. “In a book, that we had to read in college. I had forgotten all about it – then I remembered it again. And I have thought about it. Those at the bottom and those at the top – the upper-class – people don’t need all that stuff: a speech about the fatherland and morals and country and everything else. The hobo, the vagabond, and the Negro doesn’t know anything about it. They stand at the bottom – we stand above them, we!”

“You?” He cried. “Who are we then: you?”

But she had her answer. “We – are everyone, who has money. Not all of them – no, only those, that at the same time know, that money means power. And that power is at the same time justice and fatherland and religion and morals. In the book – it was a guiding thread through the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Spencer and Buckle and all the other names – there was also a quote by Speinoza –”

“Spinoza!” He cried, at least pronounce it correctly!”

“It doesn’t matter to me in the least what his name is!” She said. “The sentence reads: “Each man has as much right as he has power!” And this man who had to grind lenses, had no money and also no power and therefore no justice. And for that reason he was burned!”

Frank Braun laughed: “Well – he was not exactly burned. Tell me, how thick was your philosophy book?” She held up her fingers: “That thick! – Over two hundred pages! You can bet that none of us read all of it!”

He nodded: “Naturally not!”

“Just laugh,” she continued, I’m still right about what I’m saying. We – can do, what we want. Everyone in New York knows that Frau van Ness is your mistress – and yet all the doors stand open for her. And Miss Pierpont, Miss Fox, Frau Gordon, Aimée Breitauer and all the others – what about them? All America reeks of morals – and they merrily celebrate their feast. They are permitted to, because they stand above convention with their money! That’s the way it is everywhere! Mother’s friend, the General Consul, told me that the English, Russian, Belgian, and Romanian royal families are all German; men as well as women!: Hohenzollerns, Koburgs, Holsteins, Wittelsbachs, Hessians – I had to write them down, and I have learned them by heart for you. They spit at your German blood, at the German fatherland! And yet, when the war is over, the Germans will be just as honored as they were before the war and as they were everywhere else in the world. You can even include yourself in a list: if you have money and power and name and influence – then you can do whatever you want.”

“As far as I’m concerned,” he cried, “what do I care? My name is not Gould nor Rockefeller nor Kohlberg nor Hohenzollern, I don’t have any money and no power. So I can’t make anything of myself and must go along with the masses, isn’t that right?”

“No,” she said heavily, “no! It is not the money alone – there are still other people, that stand there, where we are. Only, they stand there because they have made a place for themselves, only because of that! That is not

easy, believe me, and it is dangerous – any moment they can come crashing down – it might also happen to us – but is not that easy. I imagine, that you belong to that group!”

He had once dreamed of something like that. Of a nation of culture – that stood over everything. Really, it had nothing to do with money, was very European in thought and most certainly not American. But in the final analysis weren’t they really both the same thing? Didn’t it come naturally with him – or with her – rising up on its own entitlement? – The Pittsberger didn’t stand above everyone, despite his millions of dollars, Herr Andrew Carnegie, who had played with evil hellfire and now eagerly desired even the smallest place in heaven from the dear God, and for that did “good works,” and donated millions. And a few others like the professor, even though he didn’t pronounce Spinoza correctly but knew him by heart, and all the others as well.

It might be education or aptitude, money, birth, influence, or a name – but there was something. But the will must be there as well and the consciousness – to stand above the masses, to be allowed to break their rules. The feeling of power – in any case, that is what gave power.

She was right: he was now running with the masses. Thought, and did, exactly that, which they all did, over in Europe just like here. And it was Lotte van Ness, that had put him into a harness – that was true as well.

She didn’t interrupt his silence, and waited expectantly.

“I don’t know –” he murmured.

Then she asked: “Tell me – would you have done everything that you have done – of your own volition?”

He replied: “I don’t know. Perhaps. If it hadn’t have been her, presumably it might have been another that would have put me in harness. And I would be pulling the cart, just like I am now.”

She shook her head. “No – you would have broken free long ago! And it is very clever, the way that she holds you. If she had married you – you would have been long gone from her. So she is only your mistress – allows you all kinds of freedom. At least that’s what you think! But in reality you only do, what she wants and nothing else. You only come to me, because she sent you!”

“Sent me?” He laughed. “She has never done that.”

“Never?” Insisted Ivy. “Really never?”

He thought back – really – Lotte had been present the first time, standing there with Tewes, agreeing that he should visit the Jefferson's.

"Give the little one her first kiss!" She had said – wasn't that right?

"Once, just in the beginning!" He said hesitantly. "But since then she has scarcely even mentioned your name!"

Ivy Jespersen nodded: "Most certainly not – she has instinct, your mistress, has also known you for a long time! It must always seem, as if you do and are allowed to do, what you want to do! And you're never permitted to notice, that you only do, what she wants!"

She took a white carnation from the table, tore the stem in half, and put the flower in his buttonhole.

"Our new Butler is so careless, he always forgets to fill the buttonhole. Our old one was much better. – It's too bad! That I had to send him away."

"You did?" He laughed. "Why did you do that?"

"Oh, he was the best butler that we ever had – perhaps you will see him again soon –"

"Really?" He asked her. "Where?"

"Frau van Ness's house," she said. "I had to let him go, and the second chauffeur – because they were both in the service of your mistress. They reported every little detail to her, that happened here at the house."

"That is not true!" He began.

She smiled. "Yes it is!" She said calmly. "I have overheard three telephone conversations. Now do you understand, why it was never necessary for her to ask you about Ivy Jefferson?"

He didn't answer.

"Your mistress is perfectly right," she continued. She is clever, and you can learn a lot from her. I have learned even more! Do you think, I don't know, why you are in this house?"

"Because I like you," he replied quickly. "Because it is a pleasure for me to play around with you!"

"Perhaps," she said, "a little bit! But that is not the real reason – that is just something that makes your work here easier. Don't ever believe, that my father is as stupid, as you – you and my mother – as you imagine. Yesterday he asked me to come to his office on Wall Street – he always does that, when he wants to talk seriously with me. He spoke with me for a long time – believe me – he sees straight through your game! He knows, that you are only courting me, pretending to be my beau – and badly

enough at that! – Because you think, you can have some influence on Papa through me. Because you assume, and perhaps rightly, that he will not do anything, that I don't want! That's why! – Isn't that right? Don't lie!"

He pulled his lips back. "That's right," he said.

"Yes, but?" She smiled.

He shook his head: "No but!"

"Sit down," she said. "I'm not finished yet. My father had five million, when he became a partner in the bank. Now he himself is senior partner and has twenty times as much. And – what is even more valuable – his trust controls the entire Midwest. Don't think, that all this is sheer blind luck and that one does not need brains to achieve it. The people here and on Wall Street appear dumb to you – because they are uneducated. And even the best of them feel quite, well, feel shy and embarrassed when they are together with you, because they can't speak even the smallest words about art and music, about the national economy, philosophy and thousands of other things. But they underrate themselves – and you do as well! You know very well, what they want!"

"What do they want?" He cried.

She pulled her lips high: "Oh – what they always want: to make more money! And especially this time, to put through a new loan for the English war effort. That's why my father called me to his office on Wall Street."

He made an effort to remain calm. Reached out to shake hands, and said:

"Then live well, little Ivy. I wish much happiness for you and a better beau. You understand completely, that I will not take one more step into your house, if the Jefferson firm signs such a loan."

She didn't take his hand.

"The meeting is early tomorrow morning at the Morgan's house. If my father signs, so will his entire trust – and by noon the thousand millions that London desires will be there. If he does not sign, it will take months until the loan is finalized with great effort – and then all your efforts will go down. It is a real good business for the house of Jefferson – and my father wants to sign. He will not do it, if –"

"If?" He repeated.

She pulled a petal from a carnation, then crushed it with light fingers against her dress.

“The Germans are smart,” she said, “like your mistress! She knows very well, why she sent you to this house. She thinks: that you are the bait – and that little Ivy will bite at it. She has calculated very correctly! The Jefferson trust is the only pure American bank, that is not entirely – for England – not yet! You helped me to understand that, with all of your speeches and writings! But now you Germans will also pay the price.”

“That is –” he hissed.

She nodded, and smiled. “Business!” She cried. “Call it blackmail – if you want! But just wait, before you answer. You have read the papers, you know, that three days ago general Villa attacked the city of Columbus in Texas and burned it? You were with him down in Mexico – you and others: you Germans have incited that!”

“No! No!” He cried. “No German had his hand in that game!”

“It doesn’t matter!” She replied. “True or not – here they believe, that it is so! Do you believe, that I’m blaming you for it? I would like these screaming idiots, to know a little bit more about what war is; I only wish, that Villa was ten times stronger than he is. And if you were the one who incited it – I find it very sweet of you! – But I will speak no more about it. I know whom you made friends with down in Torreon – his name is Colonel Pearlstein, Villa’s adjutant, a New York Jew.”

“Where did you learn that?” He asked tonelessly.

She shook her head. “My father told me yesterday. He heard it in Washington – from the Japanese Embassy. Now do you understand?”

“Yes –”

She laughed: “Tomorrow you will be sitting in the tombs, if that’s what I want! And then in Atlanta – for twenty years or more. I only think: is it really possible?”

“Oh yes!” He nodded. “Completely. Anything is possible in this country and during these times!”

She waited a small second. Then said:

“Is it really? I think, that is the single thing about us here in America! So it is possible – and other things as well!”

“What other things?” He asked. “You have more surprises?”

No,” she said, “that is enough for today. I only mean, that something else is possible too! That you don’t need to sign your name tomorrow morning in the register of the tombs – just like my father doesn’t need to

sign the agreement for the English all. Whatever you like! – Will you pay the price?”

He knew perfectly well what she meant. Yet he asked:

“What do you mean, Ivy? What is the price?”

She laughed again. “You naturally! Will you become engaged to me this evening?” She stood up, stepped over to him. “Think it over – but not for too long! I play differently than your clever mistress! I lay my cards down quite openly – they are beautiful trumps aren’t they?”

Marvelous trumps – he had to admit! And he had nothing in his hand –

He tried to gain a little time. “I will think it over,” he began. “Will give you the answer in the morning.”

But she slowly shook her head.” Tomorrow? Oh no! – Do you want to talk it over with your mistress?”

He could not think of anything else, so he said: “yes, I would like to do that.”

A lot of scorn rang out from her young voice. But it was not biting, and almost good-natured.

“Really – we must get her permission. But it need not take long: we will ask her to come here!”

She turned, and ran with quick leaps across the room. He followed her.

“What are you doing” he cried.

She already stood at the telephone:

“Plaza 376!” She cried.

He listened, as she talked to the butler, then with Lotte’s maid. She asked for Frau van Ness. He wanted to take the receiver out of her hand, wanted to say, that he –

Then he thought:

“Perhaps it’s a good thing, if she does come, perhaps she can find some way out.”

“Is this Ms. Frau van Ness?” Said Little Ivy. “This is Ivy Jefferson. – Oh please, excuse the disruption. – He is here – yes! – Your – your lov –”

She didn’t say it, “Your friend is here – Frank Braun. – Yes! – He asks you to come here immediately. – No – I cannot talk about it on the telephone! – No, no, he cannot come to the phone himself, not right now! – It is really very important. – For him as well. – Oh, thank you very much, I’ll see you in twenty minutes.”

She hung up the receiver. “She’s coming!” She cried. “You heard it.”

Her eyes glowed. She paced up and down the room with quick steps. He sat down and buried his head in both hands. Searching, finding nothing.

They didn't speak a word to each other. Waited.

Then the servant announced Frau van Ness. He jumped up.

Ivy Jefferson met her at the door, took her hand, and led her to a chair. "How nice of you to come!" She cried. "He wants to become engaged with me, you see – and he thinks, that he needs your kind permission first. I find it very understandable, very nice of him, that he thinks, he can't do anything important without the permission of his – his –"

She hesitated – but only for a short moment. She must have this satisfaction, must say it to her, in the middle of her face.

"His mistress," she continued. "Isn't that true, Frau van Ness, you are indeed his mistress!" but she didn't say it sharply, or offensively. She said it softly and gently, clearly and almost flattering.

She didn't wait for her answer. She spoke quickly, clearly and openly, not using too many words. That she wanted him – just because she wanted to have him. That she knew very well – and her father also – why he had been sent here to the house of Jefferson. And that today she had him solidly in her hands – with the Mexico story, with the loan – and with a few other things. And there was still another reason: that she had asked her to come, not only for his own sake. That she, Ivy Jefferson, still had something to talk with her about. If Frau van Ness would say and agree to it – and it was pretty certain, that she would – then he would become engaged to her, belong to her. And she wanted him for herself, for herself alone – that must be completely understood! It was completely understandable, that he would not be able to see his mistress anymore, not go to her house anymore. Would have to and – for once and for all –

It rang very soft, tender and sweet, like the fluting of a bird: "I, I want you to understand me completely, okay?"

Lotte van Ness stood up. She was very pale. She didn't speak a word, just nodded.

There was a pause then, which Ivy Jefferson broke. Not as certain as before, a little trembling rang in her voice.

"It appears, that she is in agreement – your miss –" but she interrupted herself quickly. "No, she is not that anymore – not anymore since this moment – I ask your forgiveness many times! Frau van Ness is in

agreement! – May I be permitted to ring for the servant, to let you out, gracious Frau?”

The pale Frau said:

“Are you in such a hurry? Just a word, Fräulein Ivy, from his – former – mistress. You should know – know –” she hesitated, and searched for words. Then continued. “Should know, that your fiancé needs something, which you probably won’t be able to give him.”

Blonde Ivy pulled her lips.

“No one knows exactly how much money you have, Frau van Ness! Even my father can’t say exactly – it may be, that you have more than we do. – Today! But you earn nothing during this time – and my father does. Much. Very much. He thinks before the war is at an end – that we will be much richer. You need not trouble yourself, Frau van Ness, I don’t believe, that this man, whom I take, will lack for anything, which he needs.”

A quick smile pulled at Lotte’s mouth.

“You misunderstand me, she said. “You can’t buy it!”

“What is it then?” Asked the blonde.

But Lotte van Ness shook her head. “I can’t tell you.”

Then Ivy turned to him:

“Do you know?”

He threw a long glance at Lotte Lewi, questioning and imploring. But she remained silent, and didn’t look at him.

“I don’t know, what she is talking about,” he answered.

“Well?” Asked Ivy.

Lotte van Ness said:

“No – he doesn’t know what it is. He will know what – at some other time. And if you can’t give it to him, that which gives him life – then he knows, who can. Then – he will return – to me!”

Little Ivy didn’t answer, she quickly rang for the butler. But the other didn’t wait for the servant, said goodbye, lightly nodded, and walked out.

He watched her go. “There goes my mother!” He felt.

The servant came.

“Please ask Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson to come in,” commanded Ivy.

Then she turned to him.

“I believe I will take the chance,” she said thoughtfully. “Something – that you need? That she can give you and I can’t? But she didn’t say what – and you don’t know what it is? Either she is lying – or –”

Her eyes became large, glided over him, slowly and searching. Touching his face, then his entire body, as if she wanted to undress him. She desired him, was almost greedy for him.

"Or –" she repeated in a whisper, "wants you for herself–"

She stamped with her foot, threw her head back, and breathed quickly and deeply, so that her nostrils flared.

"I want to tell you something," she cried, "I want to tell you! I want to be able to say things – to you! – That's why I want you!"

"What is it?" He asked. "Tell me!"

"I want to say things to you," she began. "But I don't know the words. You must teach me – not now, no! I know, that you know more over in the old world, in Europe and Asia – than we do here. You have more knowledge: culture screams out at us in the pages and we are jealous of you! In all things – and even more – and even more in love – as well! Love is an art – I read that once in a French book. I want to learn it, this art, as well as I can – like Frau van Ness! – That's why I want you."

She stepped right up to him, and laid her hand lightly on his. It trembled and was moist.

"Tell me," she whispered, "did your – I mean Frau van Ness, mean that you – like something special – in love? That she knew something – and could do something – that I can't and will not be able to learn? – Tell me! Answer me!"

"I don't know, what she meant," he said.

Her fingers pressed around his hand, her eyes burned into his eyes.

"You can tell me," she pleaded, "you should not be ashamed to tell me."

But he shook his head. "My word – I don't know what it is."

She sighed, became silent for a second, and then spoke, more certain and confident.

"And yet I don't believe, that she was lying. Only – she turned it around somehow! – that's what I think. Not that you need something – that only she can give you: it is her – her, that took something from you! That's what it is!"

He tore himself loose, and stared at her. Bit his teeth together. And forced the words out.

"That – that's what I have thought – more than once! How do you know that?"

She took his hands again, stroked them quickly and nervously.

“Do you think, that I haven’t noticed, how you were all this time? Often so very healthy – strong and blooming – and then at other times so tired and empty. And Frau van Ness? Wherever I met her, I observed her, at the Opera, in Carnegie Hall, at the concerts! When you appeared strong, she appeared very pale and weak – often looked, like death itself! And other times she would be fresh and glowing – and always that was when you suffered! I have made notes – since almost the first of the year – in a calendar: I will show you the dates, if you like. Tell me, what this has –”

She interrupted herself – you could hear steps in the next room.

“Not now,” she cried, “father and mother are coming! Not now! But that is what it is – almost certainly! She drank your strength – and that’s why she drove you into this twirling mess: so that you would never notice – would have no time to discover, to consider – what she was doing to you!”

“But what was it?” He cried. “How and when?”

She laughed out loud. “How – when – I don’t know. But I can certainly tell you when – haven’t you ever slept with her?”

The door opened – then she threw her arms around his neck. She jumped on him, held him firmly, and kissed him. Tore herself loose, and ran over to her parents.

“You shouldn’t sign the loan, father” she cried. “I am engaged to him.”

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He did not come to his senses that afternoon. He had to remain for tea, then Ivy drove him back home. He went slowly up the stairs, afraid of the, “Finally!” That would greet him. That eternal, “Finally” and the “Make it fast!”

Two “finally’s” rang at him, and his secretary gave another “Thank God” as well. And pulled him into the bedroom – where his butler was prepared, to help him undress.

“Make it quick, right?” He cried. “I already know! To the bazar– yes – yes! Can’t you leave me in peace for one evening!”

“But Doctor,” Rossius said reproachfully. “Today is Sunday! The big day! The ambassadors have come especially from Washington.”

“All right!” He sighed. “Give me the jacket, Fred.”

– Many thousands pressed around the enormous building of Madison Square Garden. The door had long since been locked; a couple hundred policeman kept order: ten people came out – then they let another ten inside. – But ten thousand waited – and then another ten thousand. They stood there, impatient, in the streaming rain – for hours –

Today, just like yesterday – and tomorrow – for sixteen days. Waiting, listening to the sounds, that came out through the thick walls. They were like little children. Inside was Christmas – was heaven. Inside was – Germany!

They drove to the back, and hammered on a little side door. Pulled cards out of their pockets and the colored tickets. Gave the policeman a dollar, and quickly smuggled a dozen people in with them.

Through the basement and then up into the giant arena depicting a city.

Nurnberg – the one in children's books. And it looked just like that – genuinely, like the Nurnberg of the Meister singer at the Opera House.

"You must speak from the gallery at exactly 8:30," his secretary reminded him. "Then at nine forty-five in the large hall! And then –"

"I know," he interrupted him. "In the meantime try to mix in with some of the ambassadors. Tell them, the Jefferson trust will not sign the new English loan!"

The committee marched off, with flags and banners. He had to greet them from the gallery. No one understood a word in all the noise – but they knew: there was somebody that stood up there and talked. That was enough.

Tewes rushed past, and quickly shook his hand.

"Have you seen Doctor Hertling?" He cried. "He is supposed to be speaking in the entrance hall. We're looking for him."

"No!" He replied. "It is lunacy, to give a speech here – you might just as well be screaming la – la – la."

"Do it," Laughed the journalist, "but wave your arms around at the same time, that is the main thing! But it is not at all lunacy! Three thousand people are coming here today, just to see the ambassadors. Others want to see Professor Södering, others Doctor Cohen. And perhaps, even half a dozen will be coming here to see you! We would like to make over a million dollars at our bazar – for that we must beat the drums! – There is my man – just wait, I will be right back!"

Frank Braun leaned over the gallery, and looked down into the ocean of resounding colors. It blew and flowed, there was pushing and shoving, loud

noises and cries. Colored waves under the majestic cloth sky, which covered everything in a soft yellow flood.

There, in front of the city tower were powerful automobiles. Six similar ones parked right next to each other, each could be won for a half dollar.

Right next to the tower was the booth, in which the sisters of the German hospitals sold puppets. Left from there were stands for the *Arion*, *Liederkranz*, *Deutschen Veriens*. as well as booths for the *Heinebundes*, *Sprachveriens*, and the *Vereinigten Bäcker* – each Association had set up its own tent right next to the others.

– He looked down. There, next to the violet dressed women of the waffle stands, was Lotte Lewi's booth. He recognized it right away – she was selling toys from Nurnberg. Three young women were helping her – and all three of them had the same reddish blond hair as she did. Silk dresses of a milky steel blue – fluffy Nile green kerchief's tied on their head.

She was selling a wooden horse and a cart to go with it. She was speaking with a fat lady, who stood in front of her, sold her a doll kitchen, and then took up a jumping Jack. She pulled the string at the bottom – and the jumping Jack jumped and jiggled merrily. The fat lady could not resist, she bought the jumping Jack as well. She tried it right away, but no matter how much she tried it would jump about like it had done before.

"Lotte can do it better!" He thought. "She understands about jumping Jacks – whether they are made out of wood or out of flesh!" Something jerked inside him, and he had a sensation, as if his leg and arm had to jump – when she pulled the string.

He knew the beat, knew it very well, how it went – it was a foolish jump, just like that of the consumptive comedian, which he had once seen in the tavern in Bonn –

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He had sat there with the students, way up front in the first row. They had thrown flowers up at the dancers and sent wine to the soubrettes, who had shrieked out horrible songs. Then had come the female impersonator – he had been the worst of them all. He had sang and danced, and had worked

very hard for his little bit of bread. But in closing he had come dressed as a jumping Jack.

He had sung a bad song with seven long stanzas, with lines that always rhymed. He had sung out loud:

“Seht den kleinen Hampelmann,
Wie er hampeln, strampeln kann!
Und die Damen und die Herrn
Hampeln, pampeln, strampeln gern!
Frauchen zieht am Hampelmann,
Und das Männchen strampelt dann,
Rampelt, pampelt Tag und Nacht,
Wie ihn Frauchen hampeln macht!”

Then came the puppet show. He had jumped up, thrown his legs apart to the left and to the right, while at the same time raising his arms into the air. Had come down, had jumped back up – again and again. While bellowing out the verses. Through all seven stanzas – and always doing this hopping about. But you could see that the consumptive little man was over doing it and the audience didn’t like it at all.

Yet Frank Braun had applauded.

“He should dance, until he collapses!” He had cried.

He had waved the old flower woman over, had reached into her basket, and had thrown colored posies at the stage. And the fraternity brothers had followed his example, had thrown flowers, shouted and applauded.

At that the fellow had started jumping again. His eyes had glowed over his success – and yet there had also been a staring fear in them, as if he had wanted to stop. But he had kept on jumping, jumping and singing.

New applause, more flowers. Screams and shouts. “Da capo and Bis!”

The little man had jumped. The sweat had run down in streams, had worn away long grooves through the makeup and powder. His jumps had become duller and weaker; then he had bitten his lips, had pulled himself together, and had speeded up again. That had been his big day, his greatest success – ah, he had to keep going.

Perhaps the crowd had understood. Perhaps they only went along with it, because it had become a wild game, a foolish nonsense. Then everyone had clapped, the entire audience had cheered and yelled.

The jumping Jack had to be out of breath up there, jumping. His throat was so hoarse, the words barely came out, yet you could still clearly hear the rattling and choking of the half filled lungs. But the music had kept going, quick, quick, and he had thrown his little legs high.

He had stood in front of the first row, had bowed deeply, had thanked the audience, and made gestures with his hands, showing that he was finished. And he had enjoyed this applause, had glowed happily, full of swelling pride.

No, no, they wouldn't let him go. This cruelty, that had begun with Frank Braun, had crawled into all the brains, had burst into flames, demanding this miserable sacrifice. Everyone had cheered and bellowed, the students had thrown gold on stage at the music – and that was when they started up again. And the conductor had swung the baton.

What then jumped up there on the stage was not human anymore. It was a lame puppet, a jumping Jack, that had been torn to shreds. The mouth always still opened and closed, but only to breathe, only to gasp, to battle with a rattling chest. Then the mouth had hung open – and his dentures had fallen out. He had grabbed them quickly, and had held them firmly in his hand.

"He's falling apart!" Frank Braun had laughed.

The consumptive had crawled off the stage, totally done in, shivering and the shaking. Yet the crowd had cried again and cheered.

A chorus girl had stepped out, and the music began for her song. But they wouldn't let her sing. They had shouted at her, had thrown all possible types of rubbish at her. She had taken it as well as she could, until one of the students had thrown the empty flower basket at her. That was when she had left.

And the public had shouted for the little man. Everyone had screamed the chorus:

"Seht den kleinen Hampelmann,
How er hampeln, strampeln kann –"

Once more he had come out, once more he had jumped, had done jumping jacks. Then he had fell. Had stood up, staggered, fainted, and rolled across the floor. Then had collapsed, screamed, pressed both hands to his mouth. And – had dashed offstage.

The audience was still applauding. Finally they had grown quiet. And they let the chorus girl grind out her song.

The students had left. But one had remained behind. Later he had gone back to the wine pub.

“I was in back,” he had said. “The fellow had a stroke.”

Another had asked:

“How do you know that? You’re not a doctor yet!”

“No!” He had replied. “There were already two doctors there.”

They had been silent for a moment. Then tall Ballus had told his tired old joke:

“You can see from that, that you shouldn’t do too many jumping jacks.”

Frank Braun had cried:

“Drink up – why trouble about the clown! He has fulfilled his duty in life. He made me laugh for three quarters of an hour!”

So he had laughed, that had been his wild gesture. And yet: it had been a lie! – He had sat there trembling all the time; had trembled, groaned, and suffered in the pain of the jumping little man. He had suffered, ah, such torment –

But his mask had been haughty, cold and cheeky –

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That time he had pulled the strings. Had made the jumping Jack jump according to his own whim. Until the toy had broken.

What was wrong with that! A female impersonator, like an old maid and rubbish, one that had never come up from out of the mud of the street, a castoff, a consumptive, a very perverted one at that. One, for whom only three doors had stood open in his entire life – those to the hospital, to the prison, or to the insane asylum. Who had in spite of that just then saved himself in the middle of the stage lights. Who had formed from out of his miserable affliction a pastry, which he had then placed in front of the public for ten pennies entrance fee. And he, just once, once had been worth the price – and that night, when he had jumped out of his miserable life, when he himself had become a jumping Jack with all his body and soul, he had

become the glory of all tramps, and had been consoled by each jump that consumed him, until the string had finally broken.

And then he had truly lived – especially then!

Now he himself was jumping. And the dear public cheered and screamed, and wouldn't let him down from the stage. Back to the stage, back out, again back out: until he collapsed! Yesterday, tomorrow and every day.

She stood down there, the one who pulled his strings. That made him jump, jump and prance in front of the public.

Oh there was a difference! He had floundered the little man to death, crudely and brutally. But it had been quick, quick – the entire game had only lasted three quarters of an hour. But the one that pulled his strings, was a Frau. She let him rest, and when he collapsed offstage, took very good care of him. When he collapsed, empty, pathetic, tired, and drained, she took care of him until he was healthy again and strong, until he could once again throw up his arms and legs, as she pulled the string. He jumped higher and even higher!

Through the months – then through the years – until his string was broken as well!

She stood down there – in her playhouse. Wrapping the jumping jack in paper, handing it to the fat lady, who had just bought it –

What? Hadn't Ivy Jefferson just bought him – a couple of hours ago?

He wiped the sweat from his forehead, and sighed deeply.

"You're hot, Doctor," someone said. "Come, we will drink a glass of wine."

He turned around – ah, Tewes once more stood next to him.

They went across the gallery, and barkers called out to them constantly. They were selling pillows and earrings, furs and houses and hounds, candlesticks and trips to Europe, jewelry and beer steins and paintings and bread, lanterns and bathing suits, vacation resorts and Hindenburg postcards, –

There was nothing, nothing that was left out. Someone even offered a South Sea island.

"That is the only swindle at the bazaar, I believe!" Said Tewes. "The English have been in possession of that island for a long time – and the happy winner must be satisfied with a photo!"

They came to the booths of their allies. There were the booths of the Hungarians, Croatians and Slovakians, beautiful women stood inside them, dressed colorfully in their national colors. Bulgarian peasant prostitutes stood at their fruit stands, delectable girls with their Swedish booths. Turks naturally, who sold sweets, and who had a large coffee tent, and even a camel: which you could ride – ten steps back and ten forward and ten back. Then the Chinese with their tea booths, silk bags, and porcelain. There were many Irish and Jewish booths as well.

A music band marched past; the blaring trumpets ate his words. It escorted the honored guest of the day to the Tribune, where the society was supposed to speak. Doctor Cohen was at the head of the procession, and with him the Count. And between both gentlemen walked the president in an expensive brocade dress with many roses around it. Her kind blue eyes looked around in wonderment, shy and yet proud, saying: “Dear God, you’re going to make a fool of me.”

But she stomped along with them through all the noise, and supported herself in a provocative way on her staff, which was long and hooked, with a gold knob on the end, like a shepherd’s staff from Trianon.

“9:30!” Cried the journalist. “We must go to the blue Hall.”

“Yes, yes!” He answered. “I’m already running.”

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It was here that Loritz, the baritone, had his kingdom. He gave four large concerts every day. The first began at 3 o’clock, the last one ended at 11 o’clock. And in each he had three well-known names and an entire group of celebrities for good measure. Speakers in between, and also actors and ballet dancers.

When they rented Madison Square Garden for the bazaar, the singer had discovered this hall.

“I was overwhelmed!” He had cried.

“Getting it ready alone will cost you thousands!” Warned the owners.

But Loritz answered:

“Not a copper penny! We will have a great cleanup, which will pay for the hall.”

– He placed a little notice in the German paper: German women, who were too poor, in order to help with the great work, should present themselves – to Herrn Augias, office number twenty-three, at Madison Square Garden. And the poor German women came, many hundreds already on the first day. The baritone told, how they took shovels, and commandeered his regiment of sailors – and how they carried out fourteen immense loads of trash. Every morning the cleaning women returned again, and cleaned and scrubbed all the rooms. That was their work for the fatherland.

Frank Braun stepped into the hall. Above on the podium stood Kreisler, the best, the most German violinist in the world. He had just set his bow down, and had turned to leave, but remained standing, held fast by the rising jubilation of the crowd. He, Fritz Kreisler, whom everyone in America idolized, no matter, which race they were. But those down below, these Germans, had even a better reason for it.

He, Kreisler from Vienna, had been a dragoon lieutenant in the war. Had been shot from his horse in Poland and had been seriously wounded, then had come over here as an invalid. He was a hero to them, who also fought once more in this country. Not just with the fiddle, but also with everything that he could weave with his violin. Over there he had fought against the Russians – here he stood against just as dangerous an opponent: Charles Schwab and the Morgan trust. The Bethlehem stocks climbed, climbed every day, from seventy up over six hundred – those blood stocks, which spewed death in Europe, which strengthened the already weakening allies and created an ocean of tears from the North Sea to the Bosporus.

It crept into the violinist’s dreams, and would not give him any rest. He took the money he had raised out of the bank . He, the artist, was a gambler – with the violin – with the saber – and now with a sack of gold. He took everything that he had gathered together through the years on his triumphal march through the world. Gambled on the Bethlehem stocks, betting on the falling market. He ran like a bear in those high times of the bull market, battling against Wall Street – entirely alone. They seemed bright and shiny to him, and his weapon – was an entire, large million!

And yet it was only a miserable, pathetic million – an impoverished pile of rubbish compared to the the resources of Morgan and Schwab! One million – which became nothing in scarcely eight days. And so he woke up

after one week: a beggar, that didn't have anything other than his violin – and a half million in debts as well.

Wall Street laughed. Wall Street was benevolent, Wall Street created a syndicate, just for him. They paid his debts, but with teeth. They even set him up for a month, so that he could live. Only now, from that point on, he had to play for the syndicate, for five long years, until all his debts were paid off as well as the interest.

The violinist signed everything, and put himself completely in the hands of the syndicate. And there was only one thing that he fought for and only one thing that he insisted on: where it had to do with a concert for Austria, Germany or Hungary – there he was permitted to participate, permitted to play for something else.

And there he played, even more freely, more beautifully than ever, growing high above himself, giving his entire performer's soul. Like he had previously given his blood and his gold.

That was the last thing, that was the only thing, that still remained to him – and he gave it – always, again and again.

– Then they became quiet down below, as he picked up the fiddle.

And he played: "God receives –"

It was the powerful hymn of all Germany and Austria. Shouted out, reeled off, every day and every hour, for pennies. And yet from him, without all the words, it rose high above everything earthly, reaching far out into the blue spheres – across time.

There was no fiddling, no singing of his sweet violin. It was an eternal, unending prayer.

– No one dared to applaud. They sat there, silent and stunned – crying, crying.

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One sang after Frank Braun spoke. Little Herma Lindt, – Viennese, brown velvet eyes, brown velvet dress – sitting like a young boy in the wing, playing the Danube waltz –

How could she compete? After that violin prayer!

He slowly left the hall. – Two women passed by – red haired, in steel blue and Nile green.

It was Lotte van Ness with with one of her ladies. He followed them, and saw them step into the Turkish coffee tent. He waited a little, snuck past, and sat down, a little ways away, at a table.

They didn't see him, and spoke with each other, drinking their coffee, buying things from anyone, that came up to them.

He stared over at them –

Then Doctor Cohen came, sat down with him, and noisily gulped down a large glass of water.

"What did you buy?" He asked. "Your jacket pocket is hanging down like a meal sack."

The Doctor carefully pulled a black box out of his pocket. "This?" He cried. "Oh, I've been dragging it around with me now for four days. I brought it for Frau van Ness and keep forgetting it again!"

He laid the box on the table.

"What is it?" Asked Frank Braun. "Am I permitted to see?"

Doctor Cohen opened the box.

"It is a set of surgical lancets," he cried, "a very beautiful one at that – you can't get anything that cuts better anywhere in the world."

Frank Braun looked at them – a complete, medical set lay in front of him. "What does Frau van Ness want with that?" He insisted.

"Professional secret!" Laughed the doctor. "But I will tell you – she needs it for her corns, my dear Sir!"

Frank Braun cried:

"But Lott –" he bit the word in the middle, and stared as if enspelled by the shiny knives. Oh, he knew them very well, her white, well groomed feet. She wore rings on her toes, many colorful gems, when it was her will –

But corns? Ridiculous! – Her, Lotte Lewi!

The Doctor snapped his box shut, and handed it over to him.

"Please do me the favor, of giving this to her, when you see her. Otherwise I will have forgotten it today for the fifth time."

"Give it to her yourself," he replied. "She's sitting over there – no, she just stood up, and just paid. Now she's coming over here."

Doctor Cohen jumped up.

"Good to meet you, gracious Frau! Here is your lancet set."

She took the box, sighed softly, and smiled.

"A little late now, dear Doctor. Who knows, whether I will ever still need them." She turned to her friend. "Doctor Cohen – may I be permitted

to introduce you to our president?”

The two greeted each other, shook hands, and then slowly left together.

Lotte sat down quietly at his table, without a word, placing the box in front of her.

She didn’t speak. A smile was frozen on her lips, her snow white hands lay on top of the black box, like those of a marble statue.

“She is a corpse,” he thought, “a corpse.” And he felt: how he loved her so, loved her so very much.

Something cramped in his breast. Tears climbed into his eyes, dropped down, ran across his cheeks, silently, slowly. Yet unnoticed. He had so much love for her, so very much love –

She stood up, and lightly stroked his forehead with her cool hand.

“Live well,” she said.

Then she turned away.

His gaze fell on to the box. “You forgot your lancets!” He cried.

She nodded, thanked him, and took it.

“Later perhaps –” she said.

Then she left –

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He took his handkerchief, and wiped his face. Then slurped the thick sweet coffee.

Then he couldn’t see her anymore. Then he could think more clearly.

Little knives, so many high quality little knives, polished and sharp. The best in the world – for stabbing and cutting!

She had told the doctor they were for corns – she, who had never had any in her entire life!

So why did she want the lancets?

And what had she answered the Doctor – what was it? That now it was too late –

He laughed out loud. Too late! – Too late? Because on this very day little Ivy Jefferson –”

Had most certainly – had bought the jumping Jack! Him!

He rubbed his eyes, and stared at the table. She had requested the lancets for him – there was no doubt about it! Hadn’t he often seen such

little knives lying on her night table?

And the little, shiny one – that she had given him to take along to Mexico? How had it become bloody on the day of his mescal intoxication?

At the time he had been fast asleep on his sofa, dreaming absurd dreams. But the little knife had become bloody!

What had blonde Ivy said? – How and what – that she didn't know. But when – yes! It was when he slept with her – that was when!

And hadn't Lotte immediately taken the dancer with her to her house? Why did she do that? Had she done something that Lotte van Ness had commanded – while he was sleeping? Was she just her tool?

For what –?

In any case – whatever it was! There was one thing for certain: something had happened to him – and it had happened again – while he had slept! And it was somehow related to these sharp little knives – and with red blood. And no less to this strange disease, that kept attacking him over and over, this terrible suffering, over which all the doctors shook their head in bewilderment. This thing that sucked him dry and empty! – She drank him out – it was her, Lotte Lewi, his beloved!

He loved her so much – and had never felt it so much as right now. He had so much love for her – he didn't want to believe all this –

And yet it must be true – nothing else was possible.

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He stood up, and stepped one more time over to the gallery. There she stood in her booth with her three ladies – Nile green kerchiefs over milky steel blue dresses. And the red hair – such brazenness! – She sold wooden horses, colored cows, doll kitchens, cannons that shot peas. No jumping jacks? – No, he didn't see anymore in her stand. Sold out!

He climbed down the steps into the giant hall, and let himself be pushed, wherever the flood of people led. A hand laid itself on his arm – it was the president.

"Will you escort me," she said, "I must go to the newspaper's house."

"Where is that?" He asked.

She pointed at the wide path, that led gently downward. "Down there – in the basement."

She braced herself solidly against him, and he clearly noticed that only a strong will kept this Frau upright. Through many months of preparation work day after day, always present at women's committees, eighty of them and more. Always smiling, always friendly, so cordial – just to make things happen! And now here, twelve hours a day, upstairs and downstairs –

Her kind eyes fluttered over the crowd.

"It is a high honor, to be the president," she said. "But believe me, Doctor, it is not that easy."

He nodded. Oh no, it was not that easy, to work for Germany in this country, he knew that very well. They pressed across the room through the stifling exhalations of ten thousand people. The air pressed into the mouth and nose, a thick smell of sweat and dust.

"The masses devour us," he thought, the masses digest us. We are only nutrients, and nothing more. And we never rest – are always moving: in a peristaltic way."

– They were in the basement level, which lay under the street. That was where an enormous fair was. Puppet theaters and wrestling, shooting galleries, large beer tents. The booths of the Marine industry in long rows: clowns, booths in which you could marvel at Fat Bertha, submarines, zeppelins and airplanes of all types. Wooden models of Rolandes and Hindenburg's to put together, booths with sea serpents and mermaids, monkey theaters and flying circuses: German pilots! Various wine tents – whose talented ship's engineers had created little ventilation shafts for in unimaginable ways, pastry stands, juggling. Coffeehouses with Dutch waffles, Viennese croissants and Berlin pancakes.

They came to the house, which the "German Journal" had donated. It was already built and completely set up – you could win it for a dollar. And naturally the ground and floor as well – which lay somewhere on the New Jersey coast.

The Frau president made her visit. And the ladies and gentlemen of the editorial staff rushed out receive her –

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He went on alone. Stepped into the pretty Biedermeier garden, headed by Miss Breitauer.

Here there was only champagne and nothing else. It was where the honored and the very rich sat, the folk pressed past, and remained standing curiously at the rose hedge – whispering, pointing with their fingers:

“Look, there he is –!”

Aimée Breitauer stood in the middle under the Linden tree. She played hostess, and her costume was genuine, like that of her twelve serving maids.

The ambassador sat there, pressed shyly into a corner. But outside, behind the hedge, someone one had spied him.

“There, it’s the count!” He cried.

The count – he was the symbol of Germany in this country. He was the Kaiser’s ambassador and the Kaiser’s friend, and he was the homeland, was Germany itself!

“Hail!” They cried. “Hail and hail, long live Germany and the Kaiser and the count. They sang the “Watch on the Rhine”, sang “Deutschland Über Alles” and the Prussian song. And they wouldn’t stop, until he climbed onto his chair and gave a speech.

More cheering and rejoicing.

“Someone next to him hissed:

“It is a shame, what he is doing!”

Frank Braun turned around. A Frau of ripe, upper-class beauty – it was Frau Thistlehill.

“What is a shame?” He asked. “Look again,” she hissed, “she’s sitting at his table again! The Ambassador drags her around with him everywhere, his mistress, that black haired one! That piece of shit – that covers herself with diamonds, since she married a millionaire! She is a prostitute – haven’t you slept with her yet? My husband has, everyone in this garden has slept with her .”

She screamed it out, to be heard above the noise.

“Be quiet!” He urged.

But Aimée Breitauer turned around, and patted her good-naturedly on her naked shoulder.

“Well, well,” she laughed, “and perhaps you are not, little child? Why such jealousy?”

She left her standing, and turned back to Frank Braun:

“Well, how do you like my dress?”

He looked at her from top to bottom.

“The devil knows, how you do it, Aimée! The oldest of your ladies is ten years younger than you – and you appear ten years younger than even the youngest. And your dress – give your tailor a kiss from me!”

She leaned against him, and said:

“My dress is very comfortable – and it has a secret!”

“Another one?” He laughed. “It seems, that all your dresses have secrets – which really only result in more comfort. But what, Aimée, can you capture here – with such comfortable clothes?”

She waved to him, “Come with,” she whispered, “I will show you something.”

She pulled him back behind the small fountain, which sprayed over the lilies. Past a little Jazmine bush, and then pointed with her hand to a wall of honeysuckle.

“What do you see?” She asked. “No, no, naturally not. No one can see. My gardener is just as talented as my tailor.” She took his hand, and guided it into the green shrubbery. “Grab that!” She cried. “Pull it open – but carefully!”

He felt a handle in his hand, and slowly pulled it open. A narrow door opened softly.

“Enough!” She whispered. “Look through the crack.”

He peered inside, as she requested.

A small room. Carpet on the floor – mirrors on all the walls. In one corner sat a little leather chest, and a couple of stools as well. His secretary, Ernst Rossius, was sitting on the narrow sofa. He was bent over, writing.

She shut the door very carefully.

“I have locked him in,” she laughed, “He must make me a poem. He will be well kept there, until I find the time, to eat my dessert. I am really happy about it – he is such a cute boy!”

Chapter Twelve: Bloodstones

"A bloodsucking bat, carved into a bloodstone, is the only bloodstone, that gives the bearer power over the incubus and succubus; it helps with conjuration's as well as with temptations."
–Ragiel's book of magic (XIII century)

He sat by the ocean in the silver night.

He was entirely alone on the beach; the light of Newport homes glowed in the distance. There was no people, no bird cry, not the slightest breeze in the air. The water was so calm, so vast.

But over there, a little bit to the north, must be the steamship route – for the English, and the French, I tell you. For the Dutch as well, the Norwegian, Danish and Greek – but never, never for a German one.

They all carried guns and rifles, bullets and grenades, sabers and pistols. They carried airplanes and submarines, machine guns, all kinds of war supplies – anything that America could produce to help force a bleeding Germany to its knees. For his country – oh yes, they had cargo on board for his country as well: a few dozen sacks of mail on every neutral ship. The English confiscated those at Kirkwall and Falmouth – the Masters of the ocean didn't want even a few letters to reach their destination. Letters – which refreshed, and revived the spirit; they were like bread – and Germany was supposed to starve.

He sat by the ocean in the silver night. He had walked out from Oakhurst, the large Jefferson estate. He sat there in the sand, waiting for Ivy, his fiancée. Dreaming.

He had been here now for a week. He had stayed in the hot city for as long as he could, and had always postponed this visit. Finally he had come, and now he was glad to be here. He swam with Ivy, rode horses, drove in the auto – or lay in the sun on the beach. No one saw him, except his fiancée. Her father as well, when he came out for the weekends, and her mother and her formal beau, the English consul. – This place was good for him – and the rich luxury, which surrounded him. The vast parkland of Oakhurst with its game preserve, with its wide green mowed lawns, with its countless greenhouses. A hundred gardeners worked there – and yet he scarcely saw even one. That was how large the park was. They rode around

in their dog carts, sometimes drawn by a donkey or a pony; or they played golf, especially when the elder Jefferson was there.

But in the evening, after supper, he went out of the house alone. He sat in the dunes, dreaming. Waiting until Ivy came for him – then they wandered together on the beach.

She didn't ask much, and left him very much to himself. But she listened, when he, rarely enough, wanted to talk; she had an interest in everything, that he did and spoke. She took over him, flattering, flattering herself into his feelings. Ivy, he thought, Ivy: her parents had been clever to give her that name.

Today she was very late. He saw her slender figure in the distance, but didn't go toward her, and remained sitting quietly, waiting, until she was with him.

"I brought mother to the train," said Ivy. "She is going to the city."

"Because her consul can't come out this week?" He asked.

Ivy nodded. "Yes, – but why do you say that?"

"Why not?" He replied. "It's true."

"It really is," she said. "But that is why you shouldn't talk about it. You know it – I know it – so what's the big deal? It is so German, to give everything their proper names."

He laughed:

"And so American, to not do it! And yet, Ivy, what about you yourself? – What did you call Frau van Ness?"

"Your mistress!" She answered. "But I had a good reason to do so. I wanted to harm – to hurt her with it. And – perhaps also – to hurt myself. It's different with my mother – I don't want to hurt her; I want to help her, when I can. It is her happiness in life to be young! And she is young, as long as she has her admirers, and even more her beau, the General Consul."

"Tell me," he asked, "does your father feel that way too?"

"I think so – yes," she said slowly. "He allows it – and that is good. He has his actresses, his chorus girls – I don't know that for sure – I only think it, because everyone on Wall Street has them. And he doesn't trouble himself over what mother does, and simply says:

"It is entirely understandable; that it is only a harmless friendship and I say the same thing, and that's what you should say as well – from now on, that it is nothing else! Perhaps it is really true: that the two of them are not up to anything, when they – are alone."

“I’m right,” he laughed, “everyone lies so beautifully about everything”

She grabbed his hand, and pulled him up.

“Yes indeed!” She cried. “Besides your teaching me, I find other things in the books, which I had to read, things that I like! Like this – the Cardinal Meserein said: *‘La vérité? Qu’est ce que c’est? –Une fable convenue!’*”

“The Cardinal’s name was Mazarin,” he corrected. “And he didn’t say that, it was Richelieu.”

But it was a Frenchmen!” She replied. “And it fits, fits – even if his name is Billy Sunday.”

She took his arm in hers; and they slowly walked further.

She said:

“You can learn how to lie if you really want to know – you and all your Germans!”

He thought:

“We can never learn how!”

– Oh, she was so very right: that would be the smart thing, to become great, rich and powerful. It was the most profound wisdom in life, for the individual as well as for the folk. Those three resounding words of the French rang out into the world: *liberté, fraternité, egalitéy* – they were such good lies, that everyone believed them – himself as well. And the English sang: “My home is my Castle,” as well as several other moralistic little proverbs. But America took all those phrases that it could find and braided them into a laurel wreath for their victory crown. They shouted out those absurd lies, and forged them into glowing reality. Freedom – equality – morals – all of those ideals: Hail France, England, and America!

But the Germans called these things by their real names. And they began first with their own ideals, which they knew the best. They said: ‘That is bad of us’ – and they were right.

Then the choir sang:

“Can’t you see, that we are the worst people in the world! – They said it about themselves! – ‘We are the worst, the most enslaved, the most immoral –’”

And at the same time the Germans believed, like all people do, in those most beautiful of phrases, which others had coined; believed: that everyone else was better than they were! The others guarded the highest ideals of humanity – England, France, and America! But he recognized all those lies,

and also gave foreign things their proper names – so they spit on him in moral indignation.

And to those enslaved, to those immoral people of the earth he then became the cheekiest liar in the world – he, because he dared to offend this sacred reality. He was the lowest of them all, the dredge of humanity – that is where German education and German culture must always lead. The guardians of all ideals had already forged a great new reality, which all the world now believed in: German culture, was the cancer of humanity, the curse of the antichrist, and hell itself.

And the folk gathered themselves around the holy banner of England, France, and America. And they needed to pull up, burnout, and starve out this poisonous snake venom pestilence of the Germans!

The recipe was so simple, so foolishly simple. Every Frenchmen felt it, every Britain and Yankee: that truth is a very dangerous thing, which man very, very seldom can use. But they can always use lies, every day, every hour – over and over again!

Lies alone ruled the world.

He thought:

“We will never learn how – never! We – oh every single one of us carry somewhere hidden in our brain a glowing longing after truth. It glows through, and burns us on the forehead – the mark of Cain of the Germans.

Little Ivy felt it clearly. She didn’t need the wisdom of Richelieu – nature had given her the right instinct: to guard herself from the truth! Make a pretty little fable of lies – and whistle them out into the world. Everyone will believe you, if you just act, as if you believe them yourself. And just try it once: it is so easy, so childishly easy! Every man in the entire world can understand it – except for the Germans, because they are barbarians, half animals.

She lightly patted his hand.

“You will lose the game,” she said quietly. “Romania has also entered the war.”

“How do you know that?” He asked.

She said:

“The Consul called up a little bit ago, and he told mother – they just received the cable in Washington an hour ago. He has already been saying for weeks, that it would happen – I didn’t want to tell you about it, because I didn’t want to hurt you. Romania – that makes another six hundred

thousand soldiers for the allies. And they have the best weapons and the best guns – all from Germany. Do you know, that your King is a Hohenzollern?”

He nodded. He squeezed her hand – she really understood him. She became quiet, and they silently walked across the sand.

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He knew him well, this Hohenzollern. Had gone to the same high school as him, and had scorned the Prince and laughed out loud with the other boys. There had been many stupid boys pressed into the school desks – but none were as stupid as the Prince.

They called him Prince Kakadu.

He had lived at Castle Jägerhof. That had belonged to the Hohenzollern’s during that time – then the city had purchased it and the mayor had lived there. But at the time it lay alone in its park, in the middle of the city, serving only the Prince, his court master and a couple of silent servants. From there he went to the old high school, which lay on the city moat, past the art gallery, within the beautiful court garden. Through Seufzer alley along the Düssel, over the hill, and then over the golden bridge to Anasberg. Every morning he went there and every noon he came back.

One time he didn’t come home. Not at noon, not in the afternoon and not in the evening. The court master became uncomfortable, became anxious, and finally despaired. His prince had vanished.

He ran to the school, then to the police, and then to the militia. Yes, he ran to the regiment, to the Colonel with his thirty-nine Hussars and Ulanen. His Prince was gone – and everyone had to help search, the entire city had to help.

No one found him.

In the middle of the night the Prince came back home, entirely alone. He looked very strange – wearing only a jacket and vest, shoes and stockings. With no shirt, trousers or underwear. He was completely wet.

He told a most incredible story. As he had gone back home through the court garden, exactly at high noon, three ruffians had come up to him, had grabbed him, and had bound him. They dragged him to the Rhine, hauled

him into a boat, and sailed downstream. They untied him in the boat – just took his clothes away, so that he could not escape. But he found an auspicious moment in the darkness, when the three were not watching, dived down into the water, and swam powerfully to the shore. The robbers shot after him with flints and pistols, and paddled after him, but lost him in the darkness. And he came safely to the shore – somewhere at Kaiserswerth. Then he hurried back to the castle in the night.

"Kidnapping a prince!" Lamented the poor court master, "Blackmail!"

He screamed once more to the police and militia, to the city authorities and judges. They had to close the borders, had to catch the kidnappers, before they escaped to Holland. A Hohenzollern prince had been kidnapped in broad daylight, in the middle of Germany at the end of the nineteenth century!

Oh it was a scandal, an eternal shame for the entire city!

City officials and judges, police officials and colonels were very upset. What should they do? It all sounded so incredible – but a prince had said it, a Hohenzollern prince! He had disappeared for twelve long hours – then came back, dripping wet, without a shirt and trousers, around midnight.

They found his trousers and shirt, in the Rhine, the very next day.

That must have been what happened!

And it could have happened – and much more would have happened – without Doctor Peter Schmitz, the teacher of the high school. He alone saved the authorities, saved the city.

Something occurred to him – which he had lectured about that same day in history class. It was the hour before noon – and the Prince had been in the class.

It was the story of the kidnapping of young Kaiser Heinrich IV. When Archbishop Anno from Cologne sailed up the Pfals to Kaiserswerth and stole him from the arms of his mother Agnes. He dragged him aboard his ship, and then sailed down the Rhine and imprisoned him in holy Cologne.

Herr Ordinarius went to Jägerhof Castle. When he came out, his face was radiant, and he was laughing a lot. But the little prince was howling.

It didn't help him; it had to be told.

So this is what really happened:

As he went back home, from the school, something very human happened to him. It happened very often with the prince, even though he was in high school, and two years older than all the other boys in the class

at that. He knew very well, that he was much too old for such pranks – he was that bright at least. But he was ashamed, and afraid to walk up to his court master with such an odor.

That's why he ran to the Rhine. Searched for a quiet little place, pulled off his trousers, underwear, and shirt. Then he washed them out –

But the evil Rhine sent a cheeky wave – and he jumped out of the way. Let go of the laundry – which the current stole away.

The prince's laundry.

The prince ran to the beach, whining and howling. He only dared get into the water up to his knees – it was so wet. So his little shirt and trousers floated away.

He sat on the grass and cried. Until the story occurred to him, which the teacher had just told. Of the young Hohenstaufen Kaiser and the evil Archbishop Anno. Of the ship on the Rhine and the Pfalz at Kaiserswerth.

He was also a prince of the royal house. Was a Hohenzollern – and that was like a Hohenstaufen.

And he had to tell some excuse, when he got back home.

He couldn't find a way out of the mess. But he had created the mess and he soon had the feeling, that his court master would make him fix it.

Doctor Schmitz did not remain silent and that evening the entire city knew the story of the trousers, that had been stolen from the prince. And the colonels of the regiments, the gentlemen of the police, of the court and the city attorneys silently gave thanks to the heavens, that they had not done anything, not anything at all.

But the next day, as the prince walked past the playground during the 10 o'clock break, it broke loose. Screams from out of hundreds of young throats:

"Prince Kakadu! Prince Ka –ka –du!"

No one was the author. It was there, that word, waving in the air, buzzing in the old rooms of the high school, filling the heads of the blond youths. And it broke loose again during the free hour, beating around the prince's head like a drum roll:

"Prince Ka –ka –du! Prince Ka –ka –du!"

It is true, that only the very little children screamed it out, the fourth-graders, fifth-graders, and sixth-graders. All the others turned their faces, didn't say a word, and remained calm and silent. But when the prince

became angry, and grabbed one of the cheeky young boys, to beat him up, one of the others stepped up.

"Let go of him immediately!" Commanded one of his own classmates. "If you don't fill your trousers, then they won't call you Prince Kakadu!"

The lower classes were heavily disciplined, but it was no use. Every day the outcries became louder and wilder. And the children of all the other schools took it up. Wherever the prince was seen, it was shouted out at him:

"Prince Ka –ka – du!"

It lasted a week, then the prince left with his court master. But he would remember that week for his entire life.

He went to Romania, a few years later, where his uncle was King and his aunt was Queen. They adopted him, wanted an heir who was German, and one from the Rhine at that, like they themselves were. They were German and their court was German. The King was a Hohenzollern, and his heir would be a Hohenzollern. And the Queen called herself Carmen Sylva, and thought most certainly, that she was a German poetess, and she wrote poems, that rhymed, to the glory of the Rhine. The students sang them, all the way to Bonn, especially after they became drunk.

"Am ganzen Rheine der schönste Fleck,
Das ist der Bahnhof von Rolandseck –"

The king and queen died – both that same year. And they had scarcely closed their eyes, when the young king betrayed his fatherland. He pulled off the blue robe of the Hohenzollern's, and slipped on the gold embossed trousers of English cut. He, Prince Kakadu –

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Frank Braun pressed his hands together. It came out through his teeth like a forced prayer:

"So he was supposed to fill her up again, her new trousers! Mackensen could help him with that – and the Hindenburger as well!"

"What did you say?" Asked Ivy.

“Nothing, nothing!” He replied.

She said:

“The King is a Hohenzollern. But his Frau is a Koberger. And the English prime minister in Canada is a Koburger – and his wife is a Hohenzollern as well. And they are working, as only they can, for England and against Germany!”

“You heard all of this from the Consul?” He hissed.

“No!” She replied. – “The Koburgers are the foremost family in Europe. They are like the Vanderbilts or the Astors with us. Every year the koburgers put out a book, like the ‘Social Register’ of New York. The Consul just brought this book to me – that’s how I know all this.”

“The Koburgs don’t publish anything!” He said. “It is a coincidence that it is published in Koburg and that’s why it is called the Koburger.”

“Well, well,” she laughed, “as if I cared! As if I were not completely indifferent! Did you know, that even the dethroned king of Portugal – his name is Manuel – is a Koburger and has a Hohenzollern for a Frau? He even wants to enlist in the English army! The English are so clever – I am amazed at them – really!”

He stood there, staring at her.

“Me too, Ivy, me to! I am amazed at them – really! And to be honest! They are ten thousand times more clever than we are! – Do you know, that the revolution in Lisbon, in which Manuel’s father and his brother were murdered on the street, was only made possible with English money? That the Republican administration of today, stalled our ships and declared war on us at England’s command, only because England paid for it? Wait, I will tell you some more – what I just heard in the club about the Portuguese royalists! They turned and fled to the German Kaiser, so that he could send them one of his princes, and at the same time swore the highest praise in their love and amazement at Germany! Do you know, the answer that our diplomats gave for our Kaiser? That it was even the core of the monarch’s idea, for people to remain true to the original ruling house – and that their Spanish King had a Hohenzollern as a Frau, so he was also tightly bound to the house of the Kaiser! That’s how it was at the beginning of the war – when the monarchs in the north prepared for a great defense, and they only waited for one thing – the resounding name of a leader! That was the German answer: honestly and – immensely stupid! The English played their game much better – in Italy, in Romania, here in this country and

everywhere in the world. Because of them little Manuel lost everything, his crown and kingdom and every last cent! Now they give him a pretty pension every month, which is so kind of them, so benevolent! That's what he lives on, that's how he pays for his mistress. And she – she dances in the hippodrome, didn't we want to go there? – She calls herself Gaby Desly, but she comes from Olmütz – she gives every British recruit a kiss, and over here makes propaganda with her legs, and her beloved wants to be an English Lieutenant! They must both be very thankful – and with their thanks must come a good inheritance! Yes, I am amazed at England, the Almighty England, which has the majestic gift, of turning every infamous lie into glowing reality! You are three times right, little Ivy, we will never win this war – because we will never learn, how to lie!"

He screamed it out, sobbed, and coughed painfully. She laid her arm on his shoulders, and tenderly stroked his hot cheeks.

"Be still," she whispered, "be still – you can't help that!"

"It could have been avoided," he continued, softly and almost inaudibly. "It could have been avoided, that they went against us: Italy, Romania, Portugal! If we had just learned a little bit from England. There would be 3 ½ million soldiers fewer against us! Yet we are holding fast, yet we are standing, in enemy territory, unbroken by a five times more powerful enemy. But we would have won the war long ago – there would have been peace long ago! Germany was most certainly stronger in the first year of the war, but the English lied to the world:

"We are!" And all the people believed them, and their lies were stronger than the German truth, much, much stronger! – Then the East and West engaged Germany in the first year of the war and stopped its advance in the second. Now in the third it stands, stands solid and fast. But in the fourth, in the fourth –" he interrupted himself, moaning. "A hundred and fifty million are on our side – that is a high count! But the opposition count eight hundred million. And the entire neutral world will become rich on our blood, allowing England and France to live high, delivering weapons, munitions, supplies and gold to our enemies, whatever they want! 'The lie is the salt of the earth' – that is a Russian proverb, but the English have evangelized it. And England's lies have long since become reality: they are much stronger! Only they are still missing enough to win – and England will most certainly get even you into the war – it because of our diplomats criminal stupidity! For that we must die!"

“Be silent,” she consoled, “be silent!” She wrapped her arms around him, and kissed his eyes and mouth. “Look – the night is so beautiful!”

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Liquid silver all around. Everything dissolved in it – the sand and ocean, sky and air – nothing but silver, liquid silver. And the two of them alone, Ivy and him. No one else, no bird cry, no soft breeze in the air.

He lifted his eyes, and looked around. A cool and silver mist covered the world and shooting stars blazed their trail through the haze. The moon cast a light on the silver ocean – like a bright path that led far out to a glittering, sparkling square. There should be water nymphs dancing out there – moon maidens dancing in gossamer veils of silver –

But he was glad they were not dancing there, that the white square in the ocean was still and completely deserted. Empty and so lonely. That the path of the moon which led there was for their eyes only, and that this path could only be walked by their desire.

There are two desires, two that had become one. His – and the little blonde girl’s –

Hers as well? Ivy’s as well?

He looked at her – and she nodded. She understood his dreams? – Oh, he wanted so much to believe she did.

They went hand-in-hand through the silver night. Still, silent – they went alone.

So soft, so still, as if their feet scarcely touched the ground. As if they were gliding over the sand – or was it the water?

It was liquid silver.

Two desires – which had become one. Or: two souls – floating over the water – or was it the air? Everything had dissolved – there was just silver, silver. Over the ocean to the moonlit place.

Two souls – that had become one. One soul: their two souls together.

Everything was dissolved in the silver mist – sand, ocean, heaven and air. And their souls became the glowing fog – which alone existed and nothing else.

Nothing, nothing in the entire world –

Only their longing silver soul.

It floated, floated in eternity.
Silver feet – silver wings –

Silver night

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There was a scream – Ivy's scream. She jumped to the side, and pulled him back. A carcass lay at her feet. A drowned dog – or was it a cat?

It's fur was white –

She shook with disgust.

"Take me away," she pleaded. "Take me away!"

"Where are the horses?" He asked.

She answered:

"Jack is waiting with them under the elm trees."

They hurried up the dunes, found the white horses, and mounted.

"Gallop!" He cried. "Ivy – let's gallop! Into the moon!"

They raced, raced –

The night was so beautiful –

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He was alone in Oakhurst the day director Andre came up from New York. Ivy had gone into town with her mother.

Early that morning Ivy had burst into his bedroom and jumped on his bed, waking him with a quick kiss.

"We will be back tonight!" She cried.

"What's happened?" He asked.

"Oh, nothing! Father hasn't been up for two weeks and has asked us to come to town and have luncheon with him at his club."

She kissed him quickly, hopped off the bed and hurried out.

He sat at his writing table. Took up a quill, and laid it back down. Then grabbed a pencil, then the quill again. Quickly straightened the paper, and began to scribble on it.

"Dear Lotte –" it began. But he didn't want to write a letter at all.

He took up the mail, which lie in front of him, and counted his letters. Six – eight – nine. He didn't open any of them. He took a large envelope, put all of them inside, and wrote the address of his secretary on it. Let him

read them; he could tell him about them later. He grabbed the newspaper – but he didn’t read it. Director Andre would be coming today – he would have read everything on the train, and could share what was happening with him. He stuck the paper in the large trash basket.

Then it occurred to him, that he could throw the large envelope with the letters into it as well. That filled it up.

Very seriously he took back the large envelope and and opened it. He opened every one of the new letters, carefully, so that he didn’t see any of the contents, wrote the address on a new envelope, and then put the opened letters into it, and closed it. The wastebasket became fuller, its contents were colorful. He looked into it, enjoying himself. – Was there anything else he could put into it? Ah – the scribbled paper. A few scraps of paper, which he had written on yesterday. Two empty cigarette cartons.

He remembered, that he had gotten a new piece of soap yesterday morning. Quickly he stood up, hurried into the bathroom, and took the colored wrapper from the toilet table. He carried it back, and threw it into the wastebasket. Perhaps now an idea would come – some something, that would interest him, that would keep him occupied. Perhaps something, that would put the quill into his hand, that would flow from the quill onto the paper. Some dream, that would again find in him, a quick image from an old intoxication. Something, that would hold him fast for a second – or even for an hour.

Savage – tender. Light or deep. A horrible red – or bright and very sweet – like it blew in from the ocean.

The wastebasket played some role. Each morning it had to be emptied, and had to devour things to fill itself. Otherwise there would be no purpose – nothing at all. It received only it’s common fodder, like any wastepaper basket, unless you stuffed it colorfully.

He had tried that more than once. He had filled it high with paper, newspapers, and boxes. Yet it was as if it only held them in its mouth, not devouring them. It Refused to digest anything. But it was thankful, when you thought to give it something, especially something unusual like the soap wrapper today. Every wastebasket liked that.

Frank Braun didn’t laugh about it. These things had souls.

It was certain, that professor Södering spoke much better when his umbrella was close by, standing silent in the corner, wanting to be as close to him as possible. To listen. Once they had tried to take the umbrella away,

without the professor knowing about it. Only once – never again – it was too dangerous. That day he raised less than a thousand dollars.

Could Paul Conchas, the muscle king, lift his heavyweights, if he didn't carry a copper penny in his shoe? An old letter brought Max Reinhardt his success, and Hötzendorf kept the letters which he received every morning from a beautiful Frau. There was one in the English House of Representatives whom he knew of, that could only speak, when he wore a red vest, and a jockey, that could only ride well, when he wore green and white colors. Rafael Gallo was the most genial of Toreros when he could wave his bull toward the sunny side – he, became a pathetic amateur, when a black dog ran toward him on the sand. The great Napoleon's carnelian – Pablo de Sarasate's little golden fiddle –

He thought:

Things have souls. All of them –just like people, flowers, animals, stones, paintings and books, houses, the table and chairs. They all have a soul –have color and aroma –the stars and the oceans, even nails, umbrellas, rings – and wastebaskets. And it often happened that the souls of these things revealed themselves in their connection with humans. Some chemical attraction attracts them to us, a vapor perhaps, an aroma. Or an atmospheric resonance, a harmonic wave motion that radiates from it. There is something.

The thing doesn't know what it is –no one knows what it is – today. But someday man will know. We will know what it is that attracts one human to another, what creates revulsion or attraction – love or hate. The thing – that man calls the soul.

Or its expression – it's out flowing. The Indians have called it Shakti for many thousands of years. They regarded it so highly that it was thought to be an entity in itself, the one that created everything in the seven worlds. Shiva created nothing, he was the destroyer –everything was created through the divine Durga, the Goddess Shakti.

Was it any different with Jehovah, the great monotheistic God of the Jews? He didn't go to Mary when he wanted to give a redeemer to the world –he sent his Shakti, his soul, the Holy Spirit.

And the Greeks saw so many souls in things. There were living Shakti's in the stars and the winds, in the oceans and the meadows, in the fire, the air, in stones and trees. There were dryads, nymphs, and niads – just like the elves, pixies, fairies and wood elves of Nordic mythology.

Everything was alive –breathing souls were everywhere. That was the visible world. And the great God that destroyed them, the God from Nazareth, the God of everything invisible, did not have the power to entirely exterminate them. The Christian Church did not deny the souls that were in things –it just called them demons. The spirit of evil became –the devil. The colors of the flowers were damned by Saint Hieronymus –as one of Satan's alluring enticements.

The Christian sciences stumbled miserably through the centuries in metaphysical lead boots, and were even more pious than the Church. They smashed everything that had life in the outer world and allowed poor humanity to grope around in a dark, deathly cold swamp. They believed that their dominion by slaughter had led them to a great victory when they finally displaced the devil –and held Luther in even higher regard.

Then it occurred to them; that he must fall as well – the popular idea now was:

"No light without darkness; no 'yes' without a 'no'; No God was possible without a Devil."

And also, "No 'I' could exist – without an external world. No soul could exist in the 'I' without there being a soul in all other things as well."

Light came once more into the world. Colors grew and resounded. It was believed that souls searched for each other. Sometimes they found each other – but had become like strangers.

Strange – there was something that bound him to this wastebasket. Not it exactly, not the one that stood next to him – not just that one. All of them – the entire species of wastebaskets. Some were decorated, pale, enameled and with colored flowers on them, plaster, covered with gold and adorned with decorative handles, wooden ones with wood burned verses. And tooled leather, braided cane, especially one that was overflowing. Then miserable baskets, old wine boxes, old water buckets, once a broken down dog house. Round paper baskets, four cornered and eight cornered, broad and narrow, fat, thin, large and small.

But they all bared their souls to him, right from the first day, as they stood next to him, on the right side of the table. Several really had their own personalities, which he had learned over time. One could not endure the smell of tobacco, and didn't like it, when he emptied the ashtray into it. Another really liked the remains of cigarette butts and took them gladly, couldn't get enough of them, and was happy, when he smoked a couple in

its honor. One, a tall, narrow one, that looked like a stovepipe, once had a half rotten fish inside it, which the cat had dragged into the room; and since then it longed for dead fish. He made every effort to satisfy it, laid a piece to the side, when there was a fish, that was decaying in the garden, and gave it on the next day. It stank horribly – and yet the wastebasket was not satisfied: it must be fish from the room. Fish, that came to it honorably. But the cat didn't bring any more. Up until then the wastebasket had been amazingly good – after that he could not do anything more with it. He had to destroy it.

The one, which he had in Oakhurst, didn't like little cigarette butts. There had to be at least half a cigarette, which it wanted to taste. And he always had to empty the ashtray into it, every ten minutes. It was a very distinguished wastepaper basket, made out of black, Chinese netting.

He looked at it very fondly –

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His glance fell upon the newspaper, which he had stuck in the wastepaper basket. He could read the foolish headline:

"New fearful defeat of Germany and Hungary in the seven mountains."

He knew, that it was a lie. One of the hundred, which England spewed forth every day across the ocean.

Why had the wastebasket showed him that? Was that his thanks for the two cigarettes, which he had scarcely smoked? – And for the beautiful blue soap wrapper?

Now he was there, now it had him – his mind was on the war. Once again, like so many thousand times. It wouldn't let him go, seized him fast, like it held a thousand million fast every day.

Possibilities, wishes, dreams – and more – and more – and more –

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Flies played around him, and wouldn't be chased away. They buzzed at his ears, tickled his throat, landed on his forehead, on his hand. Celebrated marriage right on the tip of his nose – he could see it very clearly, if he looked down. He screamed at them, swung at them with the tablecloth. But they came again, and kept coming. Then he jumped up, caught one after another in the hollow of his hand, and put them in a matchbox. He had a couple dozen of them, jiggling against each other.

He also caught the bridal couple. But he carried them carefully to the window, and threw them out into the garden. Thought: "Live, lay eggs. Bring many new flies into the world. And every one of them shall annoy the Yankees."

He went back to the writing table, and sat back down. Then carefully took a fly out of the box. A game occurred to him, which he had once played as a little boy. At the time he had imagined the fly was his teacher, who had tormented him and whom he had hated, as strongly as only he could. Once more he played the boy's game.

"You are Janssen," he murmured. "You hit me, when you came into the classroom – and said, that I had not greeted you on the street. You knew very well, that I had not seen you at all! Just wait!" He tore a wing off the fly. "And then your wrote 'inadequate' on my homework, and wrote 'adequate' on Kramer's – even though we had both copied it word for word from the primer itself! Just wait, wait!"

This injustice cost the fly the other wing and a leg as well. He tore another leg off and then another – it didn't have enough legs for everything, which the mathematics professor had done to him. He threw the limbless body into the inkwell.

He took the next fly.! "You are Northcliffe!" He said. "Just wait, I will tear your lying legs off! Just six legs – and two wings as well: you should have six thousand legs!"

He put Edward Grey into the inkwell, Poincaré, and Clemenceau. The Czars, King Albert, King Peter and his pathetic princes. He searched out a very small one for the King of Katzelmacher. It was very difficult, to pull out its legs one by one. Mikado also had his legs removed.

Then came the Americans, that crawled in front of London and covered English gold with German blood

Wilson and Lansing, Morgan and Schwab. – The hecklers and screamers, that attacked him, D'Annunzio and Ibañez,Beck and Ochs, all the paid swindlers of the Franco-British winemakers on both sides of the Atlantic. Off with their legs and into the inkwell!

It was ended, before he had scarcely begun, there was still so much to do. So much.

There were only two flies left. "You are Prince Kakadu!" He said to the first. "It is too much of an honor to tear your legs off. You shall drown – choke – in your own shit!"

He threw the fly into the inkwell just as it was.

Then he took the last one out of his box. Hesitated: "Who shall you be?"

Then he decided: "You – you are a German diplomat. You are not, – uncommonly dangerous. You are not a lackey – and not a liar – are not bought and paid for. Only – you are immensely stupid! I will be doing you a great favor, if I kill you – you would just fly again into the net of any spider, which will suck you dry while you are still alive."

He squished the fly between his fingers, and stuck it into the inkwell with the others.

He took it up, poured the flies and ink into the wastebasket, and over the newspaper.

"I have killed many of you," he spoke to them, "that is enough!"

He rang, then commanded the servant to take the wastepaper basket away, and bring him another.

And he waved with his hand.

"Stand somewhere in a strange room, that will only be used once every three years, you stupid wastebasket! Goodbye, and starve there, until you turn green!"

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Then director Andre came.

He called from the outside the door: "I have discovered a hole! A most wonderful hole! The most majestic hole in the world! – Dear God, you must see it, Doctor, you will be beside yourself with excitement, just like I am! A

hole – I tell you – man, a hole –" he interrupted himself: "Where are the Jefferson's?"

Frank Braun said that they were in the city. That the ladies would be back that evening – and that he must remain there for the night.

Andre sat down. "I came to the Jefferson's first – they have donated five thousand for my "Lila Domino"! For that I will share my hole with them. They only need to give twenty thousand – and for their risk they will get five fold in return! This hole, here, my hole –"

He lit a strong cigar, and leaned back in an easy chair. Beaming, and explaining about his hole.

It was in Rockville Center – by train it was only one hour away from New York. Once – nine or ten years ago – the people had wanted to make it a reservoir, and flood all the surrounding land with water. They had dug the hole, 20 m deep, made it watertight, and covered the floor and walls with a thick cement sheathe. But then it came out, that that there was not enough water nearby to fill this giant lake. So it remained lying there, this hole.

"Eighty thousand persons can fit into it," cried the director. "Eighty thousand at least, if I only filled two thirds of my hole and used the other third for a carnival. And if I built bleachers surrounding it, I could create a quarter million seats. It screams of gold – that hole! – If I only do something, what I should do with it – do you have any thoughts, doctor?"

"Perhaps you can offer it as a gigantic spittoon," proposed Frank Braun. "There should be one, when someone comes here to America! Your hole –"

"My hole really exists!" Cried Andre. "It is not a joke! I can make something out of it, if I can get the necessary capital – and get it in eight days. My hole has the possibility, of seating a quarter million people inside it – that alone is worth two dollars a seat!" He became thoughtful, and scratched his chin. "Perhaps Parsifal," he considered, "Parsifal for the folk? – Naturally no one would understand anything except for the the music! Or I could have Bryan speak – and everyone could hear cheaply or not at all if he chooses! Maybe a championship boxing match would be best – Johnson's revenge on Jess Villard – what do you think? I could rent out a hundred thousand opera glasses – for one dollar per performance, five to buy them – opera glasses, because otherwise you can't see anything in the

giant hole! – And think about the prize seats up front, where you can see the boxers with your wide open eyes! A hundred dollars – two hundred, five hundred for each seat! It is a capital idea, my hole, a buried treasure, which I must raise up!”

He puffed thick clouds of smoke, swarming again with glowing eyes about his miracle hole in Rockville Center. He would make millions on it.

Then he spoke of the war. Fantastically, very romantically, always calculating strange surprises and grotesque possibilities. Hadn’t he once beat Caruso’s four aces with a royal flush while playing stud poker? – It was possible, anything was possible!

If – if – and if – the glowing optimism of this born gambler was so pleasant. So convincing, so sure of victory – that it shamefully crept into every nook and cranny.

All the retreats in the West and East – oh, that didn’t matter at all! Hadn’t a dozen things gone wrong with him this past year? The wrestling ring matches – three films – a half dozen operettas? His own money and that of his friends had gone to the devil –

Then he had found the hole in Rockville Center!

And Germany would find its hole also – it’s glorious hole – it’s royal flush, that would beat the allies cards, even if they had twenty aces!

Frank Braun stood up, and rang. “I will go to my room,” he said, “to wash up a little and get dressed. Shall we go for a walk down by the ocean for a little bit before breakfast? – Good, I will come and pick you up.”

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He left – and with him the majestic hole and beautiful royal flush. All those ringing ‘if’s’ fled out away from him and all the black ‘buts’ crawled out of their crevices. They scurried around, beating their invisible wings.

Frank Braun stepped to the open window, and looked out at the ocean.

“And what if it turns out differently! – And what if it turns out differently!” He murmured.

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It was late when the ladies came back. Director Andre scarcely gave them time to lay their hats down: he burned brightly, and had to set everything aflame, all those that sat around him.

He was very beloved by the Jefferson's, as he was in all the houses – they would give him money for even the most stupid operettas.

But this time Frau Alice was really hooked. This hole – this giant hole in Rockville Center – this hole, that lay there and which the heavens looked down upon – must strongly excite every American brain. And even if it wasn't good for anything else: it was still – guaranteed! – It was the largest hole in the world!

The largest hole – then America must have it – naturally! People had to be interested in it for that reason: that was Yankee evangelism. Alice Jefferson became very warm, and made proposals herself of what could be done with the wonderful hole.

A Shakespeare play! No, that wouldn't work – that was a year too late. Wasn't there anything, which someone could perform? Perhaps you could fill the lake with water and rent German submarines, those that had landed in Norfolk. They could play war, could dive and come back up, could shoot down a couple other ships. Or battle with a hydroplane?

No, that wouldn't work. That would make the thing much too expensive – and you wanted to make gold out of the hole – not throw gold into it.

She didn't come to any decision. But she was eagerly prepared to lay the foundation. Frau Jefferson wanted to contribute at least half of the development capital – then the director wouldn't need to go to others. But he still had many friends – with whom he must also share this magnificent opportunity. She could contribute fifty thousand for her part – that was a fifth of the development capital – he could not allow any more, really not –

– Ivy came up, laid her hand on Frank Braun's shoulder, and motioned to him. He followed her out into the next room.

She said: "Do you know why father had me go into the city? – The Duke of Stratford has asked for my hand in marriage!"

"What was your answer?" He asked.

"That I heartily thanked him," she laughed. "That I was already well cared for, that I had you and at least for now was very satisfied with you."

She pulled her lips high, a moist brilliance lay in her eyes. "Then I said, that he should just be patient. That – perhaps, just perhaps – that you would

be a disappointment. And that I would then – later – perhaps! – Consider his offer."

"You told him that?" He whispered.

She said: "Yes – in those very words. And now you know – that – I am well insured."

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He paced with long strides through his room, waiting on Ivy. He wanted to talk to her that night, and had asked her to come in a quarter of an hour.

So the Duke of Stratford – he considered. That was the work of the British Embassy in Washington, and even more of the Consul General. He was amazing, this Englishman, obdurate and persistent, never willing to give up and admit defeat. He, Frank Braun, was Ivy's fiancé – and the Englishman knew that very well, knew that this engagement was her work alone and not his. But the Consul had known the Jefferson's for so long – had seen Ivy grow up through many years. Her love was just a wild whim– a deeply rooted one perhaps, but yet just a whim. The Consul General knew very well, what he was doing, when he played this card: the Duke of Stratford.

The Duchess of Manchester was a Zimmerman; Lady Curzon, Queen to the Viceroy of India was a Leiter. May Goelet became the Duchess of Roxburgh, Margaret Drexel became Vice Countess Maidstone, Vivian Gould became Lady Decies – and so it went in a long series. English nobility: that was the greatest dream of all wealthy and prominent ladies here in Yankee land.

And this Duke of Stratford was really a showpiece. A volunteer in Flanders, then a Lieutenant, then a Captain, severely wounded and decorated with the Victoria Cross. A hero. And from one of the best families as well. Slender, well-built, blonde and blue-eyed, raised well and with very pleasant manners. A really attractive boy, good natured and modest, whom people liked at the first glance. He had been sent over here as an attaché of the legation – most certainly in the hope that the young warrior would bring home one of the large American fortunes. That would give new glamour to

the ancient name of Stratford – and at the same time an appreciable income for England's taxes.

He had three minor imperfections. His left leg was a bit stiff from a German bullet; he stuttered, when he became excited. And he was a little bit stupid.

But each of these faults only made him the more desirable to a woman like Ivy; her wealth more than made up for her lower social rank, and his trivial shortcomings gave her a decided superiority over him. Slow, and handicapped in walking, talking and thinking, this young man promised to make the most comfortable husband and as a member of an impoverished family, was only too well acquainted with a luxury he could no longer afford. Her wealth – on which she would certainly maintain a tight grip – would soon become indispensable to him and render him completely dependent upon her. And at the same time she would have a free hand for her most bizarre whims, able to live life as she pleased, in style.

Frank Braun laughed. There was no doubt about it: in comparison to him Herbert Stratford was ten times the better man for Ivy. He was a German – a nobody. Had no noble name, was no hero. He was moodish, and did not hesitate to inflict his moods upon those around him. He could be charming when he was having a good day – but he was almost unbearable when he happened to feel out of sorts; then he behaved like a hysterical female. The other never did that.

He would be a highly unsuitable husband. No Frau had ever been able to hold him for long – or vice versa, which amounted to the same thing in the end.

And he was sick, very sick. The other was very healthy.

He sat up on the bed, pulled open the drawer of the night stand – there was his store of medicines. He pushed aside the black Bible – what nightstand drawer did not have a Bible in this country? – Reached for his pills and bottles.

For many months he had been dosing himself indiscriminately with strychnine, arsenic, laudanum, heroin, atropine, mescal, and cocaine. These drugs would help for a little while, but nothing seemed to cure him permanently. His condition was in an advanced stage and his symptoms always remained the same – a tired, empty feeling, a state of anemic semi-existence that had by now become natural with him. Yes, he could stimulate himself for a little while – he was doing it every day now – he could

pretend for a few hours, to himself and to others, pretend that he was like other people, a normal human being.

But how long could that last? This disease dragged on and on, not getting worse and never getting better. He was convinced of one thing: it was Lotte who had done this, through her sorcery and witchcraft. She was the one who had drained the life from his body and reduced him to a passive jumping Jack, and it was also her who held the secret of his recovery, who could pull the strings to make him dance merrily, and could restore his health for weeks at a time. Little Ivy did not know the secret – she could not pull the strings that returned him to life. But he was supposed to marry Ivy – Ivy, of all women. He liked her, yes, and he liked her better every day. She spoiled him with her love and he enjoyed letting himself be spoiled by her. And yet, she did not have anything that excited him; she could never make him see her as a woman. She was his little playmate, and he enjoyed her as his toy, as he would a puppy.

A puppy? No, not even as much as a puppy. When his dog had been run over, he had carried the heavy body home and had sat up with it all night. He himself had jabbed the syringe full of cyanide into the dog's heart when the veterinary had told him that the animal's spine was broken. He had watched the dog pass away in his arms and then he had dug a grave for him, had covered it with earth and had planted a great Yuka tree over it. And then he had wept –

Would he weep if something should happen to Ivy? No, no – the love for his dog was much closer to him.

But even if he did love her, if he did desire her with every fiber of his body – what difference would it make? This marriage was certain to break up in a short time – she could only hold the Anglo-Saxon vision: to see nothing, nothing at all, and to believe that every lie was the most beautiful truth.

Really – he was not going to marry Ivy Jefferson for his own sake. Only, to keep her fortune German – as it would become English, if she took the Duke. And with this marriage the great Jefferson trust would remain neutral in the financial war against Germany. For that reason alone he sold his half dead body for Ivy's whim.

He considered: in the end it is the only sensible thing to do. He had to arrange it, so that under no circumstances would this money work against Germany. The thought did him good and made him warm –

Or rather: not this thought. But another, how Lotte Lewi's eyes would glow, if she knew, what he felt in that moment. That was the real reason –

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He told everything to little Ivy. She listened patiently, remained still and quiet. Then she said "Yes – that might be so."

"Well why then?" he asked.

She came over to him, sat on his knee, and wrapped both arms around his neck.

"Listen to me, listen!" She began. Perhaps it will be like that – like you see it – in a few months. But today it's not. I am still – a virgin, and have kissed no one – except you! I love you, oh yes – as well as I can. I desire you –" she stroked hastily, nervously, with her fingers over his hair. "You give me something – I don't know what it is – I want more of it. I know very well, that you give it to other women – many others – and yet I want it. The Duke – and other men, those I know – don't talk to me – don't give me anything. I am cool and reserved with them – and it remains and becomes even more cool, the longer I am with them. With you I become warm. You make me dream and desire things – that – that – that is what it is! That's why I want you!"

Her fingers trembled, as she fumbled with the hooks on her dress. She took his hand and pulled it into her blouse, under her chemise.

"Feel how my heart is beating!" She whispered. "And you – you? Doesn't it mean anything to you – nothing at all?"

Her little breast snuggled into his hand, soft and warm. And he could feel the pulsing of her blood.

He closed his eyes, yes, really, her blood was beating against his veins – as if it sought entrance. Slowly, very slowly, he felt a pleasant sensation streaming through his body softly, very faintly as if – at last – warm blood were flowing through his veins once more –

"Yes –" he said, "yes, Ivy – perhaps – now –"

She pressed her body against his, raised her little chin. And whispered into his ear: "I am so stupid, so awkward. Lotte van Ness is clever – she understands how to strike flames out of you. I don't know how –. Tell me – show me – I want to do everything, that you desire."

He thought:

Be my blanket. Lie down, my blonde child, completely naked over my naked body. Wrap yourself around me, cover me – so that I can feel the life of your young body everywhere. In your blood – your red blood. But lie still, still – don't move. – And nothing else. Do you hear me – nothing else, nothing."

But he didn't say it. He just softly warmed the tips of his fingers on her pulse.

"So you don't want the Duke?" He asked.

She quickly shook her head. "No," she cried, "I want you!"

He said:

"Then promise me, Ivy, that – if – if –" he gently pushed her away and stood up.

"If –" he began again. "Promise me, that – whatever may come, – that you – and your father and your father's money – that they will never be turned – against Germany."

Her voice became cool in an instant. "That is all you can think about!" She said contemptuously.

"Yes," he cried, "yes – yes! I must be free of it, must be certain for all time, if – if I – will you promise me?"

She shrugged her shoulders, and reached out to shake hands. "Yes," she said.

He hesitated. Her answer came so quickly, so indifferently. She promised it, certainly – and she would laugh about this promise!

Then he remembered the Bible. She was a Yankee girl – and the Bible must be something special to her. And if – despite everything – a certain youthful shyness still glimmered in her, there must also be, a certain reverence, an instinctive, shy respect in her life for this black book.

"Come," he said.

He took her hand, and went with her over into the bedroom. Took the Bible, and handed it to her.

She opened the cover. "This is mine!" She said. "I received it, when I was confirmed. Mother put it here for me, because it was supposed to bring me luck!"

Then let it bring luck!" He cried. "Swear to me on your Bible that you will keep your promise!"

She quickly put down the book.

“Why swear?” She hesitated. “Why –”

He watched her carefully. Yes, that was the way to do it; that was an oath she would keep! Let her take the Duke then, if she wished! She took up the Bible again, and held it fast.

“I will swear,” she said. “Under one condition.”

“What condition?” He asked.

“That – you marry me – as soon as possible!”

“Now?” He said. “That was firmly decided between us – and was also a special desire of your father’s – not to take place before the end of the war.

“I know!” She cried angrily. “But at the time I believed that your foolish war would scarcely last a few months. Today I know, that it is such a stupidity – you underestimate the Europeans. You Germans will never defeat England – and the allies will still need years before they can defeat you. But the idiocy of it all is so great, that no one can understand it.”

She stepped right up next to him, and looked him square in the eye.

“I will not wait any longer! I am twenty years old. I – I need – a man – do you hear me?”

She screamed it into his face, then covered her eyes with her left hand. She laughed out loud, and sobbed.

“I am shameless –” she whispered, “yes! Yes! You force me into it. I cannot wait any longer – I need you. I want you.”

He didn’t answer, didn’t take her in his arms, didn’t touch her.

She seized him again. “We can be married an eight days, if you want! I will swear to you – and my oath shall be good from the moment, when – when –!”

“When Reverend Clark gives us his blessing!” He finished. “It will certainly be him, because he married your parents.”

“Yes, yes she cried, “it will be him. But my oath will not began then. Maud Pope, my cousin, married the Douglas a year ago – and she is now getting a divorce – because – oh – because she has not been touched in all that time! So – I don’t want to marry you that way. My oath shall take effect when –” again she hesitated, repeating her “when,” searching for words. Finally she slammed the Bible on the table and cried:

“I want to say it, – and don’t care how it sounds. My oath shall begin when – I am no longer a virgin – by you!”

Her eyes shone, her nostrils flared. She had blood – blood.

“Swear it!” He cried.

She took his hand, and laid it with hers on the black book.

“I swear it to you – on my Bible – by Almighty God.”

Now it was said, now he held her. He sighed, and sat down on his bed. All tension fell away from him, he let his arms fall limply at his sides.

She didn’t notice. She sat down next to him, pressing herself closer.

“Now I am your bride,” she said. “Now I am yours – almost entirely.”

He forced himself to caress her hand:

“Yes,” he said, “very close.”

She whispered:

“If you want – my oath shall take effect tonight. If you like – I will stay with you.”

“No, no!” He cried. “Tomorrow, tomorrow, or whenever – not today!”

She looked at him, suspiciously again and watched him closely.

“I am tired, Ivy,” he said, “almost falling over tired. Now go, I beg you, go.”

She pressed her lips together. Kissed him lightly, and stood up.

“Good night!” She said. “I will dream of you – like every night. Soon –”

Then another quick kiss – then she left. He heard her soft footsteps through the rooms, heard the door shut softly. He was alone –

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A voice sang. It was somewhere – yes, in Vienna – many years ago. A voice sang, Maria’s voice. She had been his fiancée at the time.

It was a departure. He was going to be coming back in three weeks, and then they would get married. Yet he knew very well, that he would never come back for this marriage – never.

Her voice sang to him. The bridal song of Peter Cornelius. Once, then again – all of it.

“Now, my love, go and depart – tomorrow is yet another day. – Tomorrow – tomorrow –”

No, no! He felt. Not tomorrow and not ever!

“I dreamed of a myrtle tree –” she had said. And again: “Oh, my love, my sweet love, how long shall it be?”

Like Ivy, he thought, just like Ivy.

And yet – it was different!

Everything had been so simple with that child from Vienna. So natural, so peaceful. And only once did she sing out, how she really felt – at his departure.

She sang. Ivy spoke. All the differences between the two parts of the world's lay there in.

He didn't go back that time. He traveled out into the world, alone. He wrote to her, how it was impossible – entirely impossible. – She had a very pretty little revolver, inlaid with pearl. Then she took it and shot herself –

Why had it been so impossible, why? And why did she have to believe all his phrases, which he wrote? And why shouldn't she travel with him, why shouldn't she take, what she wanted?

Nothing had driven him away, other than the stupid dream of freedom. That was why he had left his beautiful bride, had left her money and all the comfortable luxuries. He had been a fool, that time, as always.

But this time Ivy held him – she had completely bought and paid for him with her good money. She would never take up a revolver – not her. She had bought his body – and she would have it.

In eight days – or – even sooner.

He jumped up. He must push it off. Must – win some time.

He hadn't touched a Frau, since he had last seen Lotte. Not because he was engaged – oh, that would not have prevented him from having a different woman every night.

It was something different. A fear – and a little disgust. He had not really thought it over – it must have something to do with his disease. When he saw Ivy – or some Frau – he didn't lust for her. Only now and then, and very rarely, a passionate desire would shoot through his body as it had done the other day at the concert with Farstin. It was, as if he desired something from that Frau – something very savage, something very rare. But he didn't know what it was – and it was most certainly not love.

If she had remained with him tonight, Ivy, – even the thought of it made him shudder. Perhaps he would have pushed her away, roughly and brutally, spitting on her. Perhaps he might have forced himself – with all the power of his will, against all his senses, against all his emotions, upon her –

He was disgusted with himself –

And tomorrow? Or next week? Wouldn't it be just the same? Which poisons should he eat, in order to prepare for the marriage night?

He ran to the telephone. Requested New York, Brian 6335. That was the number of his secretary.

He had to wait a long time. Then he finally heard the sleepy voice.

He needed to get up right away, and send a night telegram – long and detailed – that would call him back to New York immediately. It must sound very urgent, and very important at the same time.

On what grounds? – Dear God, anything! He just had to find something –

He hung up the receiver. Oh – now he would have a respite from the hangman – at least for a week –

He was so tired. He fell into his bed.

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Ivy was waiting for him at the breakfast table.

"Director Andre sends you his regards," she said. "He went back to New York with mama on the first train – I took both of them to the train."

"Oh?" He said. Then he said:

"Your mother went to the city to?"

Ivy nodded.

"Yes – she received a telegram from her sister, who is coming from Boston. There is also a telegram for you."

She handed it over to him. He tore it open – attempted to make a troubled and astounded face. He read out loud:

"Professor is very ill – you have to take over his lectures until further notice. Come to New York immediately. Rossius."

"Until further notice", he could scarcely conceal his satisfaction. The secretary had done splendidly – "Until further notice!" That was like rubber, one could pull it out and stretch it to fit anything.

"Which professor?" Asked Ivy.

"Doctor Soedering," he replied. "He is terribly over worked, the poor professor. When I last saw him, he looked very ghastly."

Ivy opined: "Perhaps he was just pretending. Perhaps he simply wants a vacation – and wants you take over his speeches for him."

“How can you speak like that!” He cried. “This man is duty personified, he would speak, as long as he has sound in his throat, and as long as he can drag himself to the platform, even on crutches! He has most certainly collapsed – the poor man.”

She patted his hand. “How dear of you, to be so considerate of him! But I can assure you: the professor is completely healthy.”

“What?” He cried.

“Yes, yes!” She laughed. “Much healthier than you! By the way, I am supposed to greet you from him, and he wants to ask, whether you will come to his speech this evening? He is speaking here in Newport tonight!”

He stared at her with an open mouth. Then she jumped up, and kissed him brightly.

“You are charming, when you make such a stupid face! – We met your professor at the train station, and he came with us to breakfast. He came on the morning train. Andre spoke with him – and introduced him to us. It’s a shame, I did not know your secretary was going to send a telegram about him because then I would have insisted the professor come to our house. I would have hidden him behind the curtain and brought him out – your overworked, completely collapsed, very sick professor, whose place you were supposed to take – until further notice.”

Until further notice – what an idiot Rossius had been, to be that foolish! How could he have not known that the professor was going to speak in Newport?

“It must be a mistake,” he attempted. “Perhaps some other professor.”

“No, no one else!” She cried. “Don’t even try it, my German boy – any child can look at you, and tell that you are lying! And add to that what I heard last night, when you called your secretary, and asked him to send the telegraph.”

“You eavesdropped?” He said. “At the door?”

She shook her head. “Much worse!” She laughed. “Do you think, that only our Washington Secret Service and English detectives can tap telephone cables? It cost me an entire five dollars – now my phone rings when you call out! And I could clearly hear everything that you said! What they say is completely true: we have to watch the German conspirators, and must not shy away from breaking the law now and then, if they can be trapped – like I trapped you! You conspired against me – you wanted to leave – admit it!”

If she were only a little hurt, he thought, or even dismayed! If she would only become angry, and cry –

But she just laughed. It was a game – which she enjoyed, and she had seen through his stupid bluff. Her cards were much better.

“Now you can stay can’t you?” she teased him. “But you can send a telegram to your secretary so he won’t be waiting at the station for you. Do you have some paper in your pocket? A pencil? Now write:”

And she dictated: “Very ill professor speaks tonight at Newport. You are an ass.”

He wrote, as she commanded. And then added:

“So am I.”

“The address!” She cried.

She rang for the servant, and gave him the paper.

“Hurry!” She said. “Take care of this immediately!”

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She didn’t want to go swimming with him that morning. He should go on alone. She didn’t have any spare time. They were both alone for the day in Oakhurst for the first time “As a bridal couple” and they needed to celebrate. She was going to prepare lunch.

“You – as a housewife!” He laughed.

He went to his room. He always undressed there, when he wanted to go swimming, and then would walk through the park in a bathrobe and sandals. Then he would run across the beach to the ocean. He only used his little beach cabin to put on his bathing suit.

Today he took his time. Hesitated, whether he should take strychnine pills or laudanum – finally he decided on arsenic.

He went through the park. Took a detour past the game preserve. He fed red beets to the deer and gave the stags glowing chestnuts. But the slender, white hart that often followed him through the entire park, snuffled at the pocket of his robe. He reached inside, and found a couple pieces of sugar for it.

He swam out far into the ocean and then lie on the beach, still and motionless, for a long time. He didn’t sleep, didn’t dream, didn’t think.

Just enjoyed himself, knowing that his tanned skin was firm, that his eyes glowed –

He had taken enough; that it would keep him fresh until late evening.

Ocean – sky –

Sometimes his lips murmured, murmured: “Lotte.”

It was just one word. Only five letters, which his mouth mechanically formed – from often repeated habit. It was merely a reflex action.

Then he thought that Ivy should have come. He glanced at the sun – it was long past noon. It could be 2 o’clock, even two thirty. He glanced around – no feet had come across the beach from Oakhurst.

He stood up, and went to his cabin. Took off his bathing suit, showered, and slipped into his robe. Then walked slowly along the little path in the park.

Two of the gardeners were just coming down the path. They were dressed in their street clothes, with little pipes in their mouths.

“Where are you going?” He asked.

“To Newport!” Answered one of them. “She gave all of us the afternoon off.”

“Enjoy yourselves!” He said.

They thanked him.

What day was this – some holiday?

He went past the greenhouses, and glanced through the glass. Enormous blue grapes hung down there – they would soon be ripe.

Then he heard Ivy’s voice right behind him. She came up to him, in a bath robe just like his. “I went looking for you on the beach,” she cried. “You must have come to the park, just as I was leaving here.”

“Do you still want to go swimming?” He asked.

“No!” She laughed. “Now we can have breakfast. Everything is ready!”

He nodded: “Good. I’ll get dressed in a minute – much faster than you, how much do you want to bet?”

“I will bet tomorrow,” she cried, “not today. Today you don’t need to get dressed.”

She took his hand, pulled him into the greenhouse. Shut the door behind her, and turned the key.

“What’s this all about?” He asked.

She laughed.

“A surprise for you. Come on!”

They went through the greenhouses. Past hedges with luscious peaches, pears, figs and pomegranates. Through laurel and Oleander, through forests of oranges, lemons and nectarines, little kumquats ,limes and Mandarins –

Then through the tropical houses, where alligator pears and cherimoyers grew, mangos and bananas, kakis, passionfruit, guanabanas, mangosteens and granadillas. It was hot, and oppressive under the glass roofs.

Through the houses filled with roses and camellias, with hydrangea and chrysanthemums, with posies and daisies.

Tuberoses grew in the next house of this glass city. An ocean of white tuberoses from the ground up; surrounded by deep violet Ladies-Bower. Three rooms full of lilies – and the walls were covered with honeysuckle vines. White and Japanese lilies, fire lilies, sword lilies, dark blue Iris, slender grass lilies –

Then glass rooms with little ponds in which calla lilies grew, water lilies, sea roses and lotus – and wisteria hung down from the ceiling. And surrounding the pond in the next house were the giant leaves of the Victoria Regia.

Four houses with cactus – the last one a flaming red.

And through six large rooms full of orchids.

Greenhouses, always more of them, always more. Some quite small, long and narrow, then high again, tall and wide like a great hall. So many, so many.

They were all connected, like an immense labyrinth. Doors opened and then shut behind them. And everywhere the murmur and rustling of the water, that flowed through them.

Then they were walking through houses of palm with high dome-shaped ceilings. Old Mister Jefferson had more than seven hundred varieties of palms – they were his greatest pride.

Through conifers. Through a forest of rubber trees. And the blazing red of hibiscus bushes –

Again a door – which was locked. But Ivy pulled the key out of her pocket, and opened it. And then locked it again behind them.

It was a high glasshouse, in the middle of all the rest. Here the murmuring water of the little brook emptied into a pond. Papyrus, gold lotus and water lilies floated lazily on the still surface of the pond, while little goldfish darted quickly through the water and there were others, ugly, as large as carp.

There was thick green vegetation everywhere. Musae and philodendron with roots extended into the air. Mighty mangroves grew from out of the pond. Wide carpet trees stood nearby, covered with red flames. Lianas everywhere, ferns and Venus hair. Orchids from the trees. – A confused tangle. But not the slightest breeze, everything was still and dead.

Three Indian temple trees – so sweet in the soft perfume of their yellow white blossoms. But crawling up the walls, covering everything with red hot perfume, were the little flowers of the Dama de Noche. Red and Violet bougainvillea covered the walls and hung down from the ceiling.

She didn’t let go of his hand, and led him down the narrow path. To the pond; and around it.

There – behind the bamboo thicket, was the place. Carpet and furs were spread around. Many pillows. A tablecloth in the middle – where their meal was waiting. Now he understand her. So it was here – here –

He didn’t speak a word. Just stared at her.

She held his glance.

“Yes,” she said. She stripped off her bathrobe, slowly, without haste. Stood before him –naked.

He considered. Searched – oh, just a tenth of a second. His glance fell on the table – and the oysters, lobster, and all the dishes. And then the bottles – champagne, Mosel, Burgundy, Cognac. Even whiskey –

That was it – that was his salvation. She had to drink, get drunk. Had to drink, drink, until she lost all her will – became completely senseless, became unconscious – forgot about him, forgot about herself – about everything!

That was it.

And he smiled, like she did. Pulled off his clothes as she had done and stood before her –naked.

He saw her arousal, saw how she fought against it. But she didn’t give in –

It was a sport, a sharp game. And she wanted to have her victory and taste

it to the last drop.

“Not today!” He thought. “Not today!”

He straightened out her pillows, and she sat down. She placed the meal in front of him, and then asked him, what he wanted to drink.

He hesitated for a moment. Then he said:

“Champagne, if that’s all right with you.”

She nodded, and pointed at the ice filled basins.

He pulled out a bottle, and searched for an opener. He couldn’t find any.

“Everything is here!” He cried. “Only nothing, to open our bottles with.”

She thought for a moment. Then said:

“Wait!” She jumped up, and ran through the bushes.

He looked after her. Her young body was beautiful with a supple, taut slimness. Her light feet carried her like one of Dianna’s huntresses.

“She is young,” he thought. “Beautiful and healthy. Very rich as well. And she wants me – wants me! Why don’t I want her?”

She came back, a large tool box in her arms. Then she placed it in front of him.

“There!” She said. “Gardening tools! Perhaps you’ll find something in here.”

There were many knives, large ones and very small ones, for grafting and pruning and inoculating. There were hooks and scissors and shears, small sickles, asparagus knives, and dozens of tools that he didn’t know what they were for. There was even a corkscrew.

“This will work,” he said.

He uncorked all the bottles, that were there, one after the other.

“Nothing will remain,” he cried, “of our bridal drink. The gardeners can drink the rest – to our happiness!”

He filled the goblets to the brim, touched his glass against hers, and drained it quickly. She followed his example.

They ate and drank. He was very careful that the glasses were never empty.

It was heavy, heavy and so humid. That helped him, it made them thirsty –

She asked for water, but he took the mineral water, and poured it into the pond.

"No!" He cried. "No water! We want to be drunk – you and I – from wine and from –" he let the burgundy bleed into the large goblet. He looked at her with glowing eyes – and forgot, that it was the arsenic, that made them glow.

He didn't speak much in the beginning. But later he grew into his role, became cordial, and talkative.

He spoke of silver herons which he had shot, early in the morning near Santa Barbara de Samana. Of the first Tiger, which he had killed, deep in the deepest part of the Ganges jungle. He told her of a brown Samoan girl, calling her a ray of the sun that a strange whim had turned into a human being. Of a sweet Burmese woman, who was nothing other than a smile, that had become flesh and blood. He spoke of a young Parsee maiden that was much whiter than any snow, of a lithe, slender singsong girl in Nanking – whose name was Va Jee, which meant: beautiful finger.

She was not human, was only a hand. Or – two hands. Two hands – long, and slender – and so full of every forbidden sin.

He loved those hands. Loved the cold, the snow and the ray of the sun and the eternal smile.

He had known one Frau that was nothing other than three-quarter time. One, that was wolf's blood. In Mezquita he had met one, on the way to Córdoba, that was a symphony of silver and black.

"What am I?" Asked little Ivy.

He said:

"I don't know – you must first become something! But today you and I should – we both should – become something here. He spread his arms out wide, and glanced around. – "Yankee land – wide, so wide. And in it a park, a glass city. In the middle of that a hot dream in the tropics. And again in that – you and I – and in us – our intoxication. It shall grow and burst into flames, itshall melt us into one with this magic, blazing flaming dream. your tropical glass forest is a screaming lie – a grotesque, savage lie, Ivy, like our love. You know that – just like I know it! But your Yankee whim wants it that way – so we will make it become true – for today – if my foolish dreams can come true!"

He half filled the goblets with champagne, and then added burgundy. He took a bottle of Meukow, and filled the glasses the rest of the way with cognac.

She hesitated, as he handed her a glass. And he cried:

“Drink! Drink! We must escape from our everyday selves!”

He put the glass to her lips and held it there until she emptied it.

“Birds should be flying here!” He said, “colored, brightly colored birds. Lizards and geckos should be running across the path, and over there, on that giant root, a lazy chameleon should be sunning himself. Crabs should be crawling over the mangroves and speckled salamanders hiding between the Lotus leaves. Here on this liana a green iguana should be watching us with small bright eyes, while snakes lazily twist their sparkling bodies through the bamboo stocks. Blue butterflies should be in the air, red and yellow ones as well – so many butterflies.”

– It was hot, and oppressive, so oppressive. And from somewhere came a cooing, a soft, cooing.

Clear drops pearled on his forehead – clear silver drops everywhere on her young body.

“Drink!” He commanded, “drink!”

A perfume – perfume – even heavier than the hot air. Temple flowers –Damas de Noche – and there must be spikenard somewhere too.

“I am thirsty,” he whispered, “I am thirsty again. Let me drink, Ivy, from your lips.”

He laid back in the pillows. She crawled up to him on her knees, grabbed the glass of burgundy. She took a small drink, and placed her mouth on his. He sipped the wine from her lips.

Then it was her turn, hers as well. She trembled, and shook violently at the mere touch of his fingers.

“More!” He demanded. “More!”

He was very aware, how the wine was taking his senses. Let it, let it: then their intoxication would lift them both out of this world – both of them together.

He broke off some Venus hair for her blonde hair. He deeply inhaled the perfume of the blossoms, threw back his head and shouted in joy:

“Me juvat: et multo mentem vincire Lyaeo
Et caput in verna semper habere rosa!”

“What does that mean?” She laughed drunkenly.

That is – what we are doing here, in the deepest cave of this magical glass city! Propertius said it, a Roman who knew more about the art of living then all the people in your Yankee country put together! Drink – drink – and kiss me!”

She lifted herself and sipped the dark wine. Then she flung the glass into the bushes, wrapped her arms about him, and offered him her lips –

“Ivy,” he whispered, “Ivy –”

A strong sensation stirred inside him. Some dark desire – a savage lust –

Her body was smooth, moist and warm.

“She is a snake, he thought, one with warm blood –”

“I’m thirsty,” she pleaded, “thirsty! Give me something to drink – wine – kisses –”

What was happening? Something aroused him, something he desired. – What was it?

And the birds were cooing. Invisible – somewhere.

His fingers ran across her skin. Searching around, unconsciously, scarcely touching her, like the soft fluttering of wings. And she writhed, trembling. Her body became one pleading moan –a sob of desire, a single shuddering spasm.

“You –” she panted, “you –”

And again she took up a glass, emptied it, and held the empty glass out to him. Another and then another. And he poured the wine and did as she commanded.

Then she laughed out loud. Poured the burgundy over him, and let the goblet fall –

Her eyes flickered. Filled with mad desire –

“She is a Maenad!” He thought. “The animal – the animal – it awakes.”

They knelt in front of each other. She raised her arms, grabbed his shoulders with both hands. Gripped him tightly, and dug her sharp

nails into his skin. Then she threw herself onto him, burying her teeth into his flesh, biting –biting.

He was still aware of everything. He was still able to think – “She is not human anymore, not a girl. She is now a mad beast – one of Dionysus’ tiger cats.”

Her bite is poisonous –

He was still aware of everything. He saw this white female, whose teeth were buried into his neck. Saw the pond, saw the deep green vegetation that surrounded it. The white table cloth, the plates and glasses and bottles.

Then everything disappeared into a red fog. There was the perfume of burgundy and of blood. And the cooing of invisible doves –

Pain – pain

He screamed.

He seized her body –

Hands – teeth –

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Then he had the sensation of falling. And the bearskin rug, on which he lay, rose up, and became soft, like feather down. It was a bed. But it moved, floated in the air, rocked to and fro softly like a boat.

The ocean glowed around him in the deep night. There was no sound of oars – only the splashing of the waves against the sides of the still boat.

He sat up. Rubbed his eyes, and looked around. No, no, there was no glittering ocean –

It was a dream. And yet he could clearly hear the rustling of the water.

He concentrated – sharpened his gaze.

He was – yes, of course!

Now he could still distinguish things – it must be dusk – a little light fell down from above.

The gurgling water and the pond. Very dark all around.

But the cloth was bright – white. And there was a white body –

With spots on it – dark. Oh – wine or blood.

Ivy –

He heard her breathing.

He got up. His foot pushed against the gardener toolbox. It was tipped over – all the things lay among the plates and the bottles. He saw the bathrobes. Took his, and put it on. Threw the other over the sleeping girl.

He slowly left. Found the door, unlocked it, and went out. Searched his way through the hibiscus bushes.

Something moved beside him, something large and white, right in front of him. He understood quickly – it was Ivy's Swedish maid, Dagmar Erickson. She sat on a chair, fast asleep.

He shook her awake. Asked her, what she was doing here? Oh – at the command of her mistress – she was supposed to sit there for the entire afternoon, waiting. He commanded her to sit right by the door, and still wait, until the Fräulein woke up.

She had the keys, the maid did. She led him, through two, three houses, and let him out.

He stepped into the park, breathed the strong, clean air. This air – that streamed through all his pores – that made him so young, and happy, in an instant.

He tested his step – springy, elastic. He reached out his arms – oh, if he could just fly – far away! And it lasted, lasted – became stronger with each step.

This was different than the false power – that the strychnine gave him. The morphine or the arsenic –

This – this was – health! Was something – that he had not known, since he had separated from Lotte –

But then – then –?

That meant Ivy knew the secret!

She – Ivy – his fiancée!

Triumphantly he flew through the evening – rejoicing –

Chapter Thirteen: Amethysts

"One of the most ancient of these magical formulas uses a material, where love suddenly turns into hate, as if, immediately after the first night of love, the glowing passion of one of the two lovers turns itself into a cold repulsion. The Aban-la-râme, translated word for word as "Stone of the night of love", is our amethyst, and used for this purpose."

–Houston G. Brady – tract over the magical formula of Sumerian – Assyrian inscription.

He was out west for three months. Speaking – speaking –

On the day before Christmas he came back – in the afternoon at tea time. No one met him at the train.

He drove back home. He unpacked his suitcase, and washed up. It was warm, the light was soft. Only, there were no flowers. And he was alone. He walked through the wide room with long strides.

Rossius might come – what was his phone number?

Frank Braun took up the receiver.

"I am back in New York!" He cried. "Can you come over here?"

But the other couldn't. He had to work for the newspaper until at least 10 o'clock. – Good, then they could meet later – at Lüchow's.

He went to the writing table. Sat down, and sipped his tea. His post lay there in large pretty piles – he hadn't had the time to have them forwarded. Rossius had read everything, had given him a report and then if necessary had written a reply.

There, under the cigarette carton, lay a few closed letters. In women's hand writing. They had not been opened.

He opened them, one after the other. From for his manicure. A request for an autograph. For a photograph –

A letter from his mother. Opened by the English censor, and then closed again. He tore the envelope open – it was empty.

Then another letter – in Ivy's hand.

He hesitated – it was the first living sign, that he had received from her during all this time.

The letter had been sent to Los Angeles, and then returned from there. He had written to her himself – three times, four times.

Where had they gone wrong?

He had seen her the last time, on that September day, in the glass city of Oakhurst –

He had gone out through the park, to the villa. Had gotten dressed, and driven to Newport for the professor's lecture. After that he had eaten with him, and had chatted for a long time. And then had gone back to Oakhurst.

He had met Ivy's maid: – the Fräulein was in bed, sleeping. But when he got up the next day, very late, Ivy was gone. She had gone to the city, with her maid. And there was no message for him.

So he also went back to New York. He waited one day and then another – and didn't hear anything. He called, and then discovered, that Ivy – and her mother – were going to Boston.

Then a couple of days later he received a letter from her father. – Ivy was sick – suffering from a nervous disorder – she would remain in Boston for a while. But she would write to him.

Then he traveled back to the western states, and made the speaking circuit, which had been prepared for him in accord with the committee. Jumping, jumping – every evening, from one city to another.

– He hesitated again. It felt a little like fear. It was the first word from her.

What was he afraid of? Did he love her perhaps – little Ivy? There was something that bound him to her.

He tore open the envelope – and unfolded her letter. Just two lines – two poor lines.

"Go back to your mistress."

And her name.

Then:

"I will keep my promise."

Nothing more – not a word. Slowly he tore up the letter.

That was the end of it. The dream was over.

And yet – he didn't understand. Why – why had it happened? Hadn't he followed her whims? Hadn't he done – everything that she requested?

Had he left her? No – she had left, she had!

He took a sheet of paper, and wrote. She should at least give her reason! Explain to him, why –?

He wrote quickly, passionately, demanding. There was a desire, a longing –

The paper covered itself with words. They screamed –

He put a stamp on it. And rang for the old servant. Then he tore up the letter.

“Take the tea way,” he said, as Fred came into the room.

What need was there for an explanation? It had happened – so! And she would keep her oath.

Only: he was alone – alone.

Lotte –? Nothing, nothing from her in all that time.

Yes – Fred? What did he want now?

Whether he should make a bath? Get his suit prepared? The Herr Doctor was most certainly invited out this evening –

Invited? – Yes, yes, get everything ready.

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Out to Fifth Avenue. Wrapped in thick furs – through the wet December wind.

It was past 8 o’clock – the streets were empty that evening. A person stood here and there on a corner, with packages and baskets – waiting for the bus. And there was the shouting fellow from the Salvation Army – with a red jacket, full white beard, and a collection bucket for the Christmas meal for the poor. It was a good business, each bell ringer received thirty percent of everything that he took in.

He went into Sherry’s. Considered and then went into the dining hall. No one was there – not a single guest in the entire lunchroom.

Then a lady came up to him. She was stout and tall, with a high fur collar, and thickly veiled. She reached out her hand, and bid him a good evening.

Ah – Emaldine Farstin!

“Who did you come with?” She asked.

“I’m entirely alone,” he replied.

“Me too,” she cried. “Then we can eat together, if that’s all right with you.”

He helped her out of the fur coat. They went inside, looked at the menu – and ordered.

“So you are alone, Doctor!” The Diva said. “Alone on Christmas Eve.” She toasted him. “Prosit! To good friendship!”

“So we are friends again?” He asked.

She nodded. “Yes – in the end it is for the best. One must become reconciled with all things – and with people too. Must take them, as they are. Only: keep our distance – as much as necessary for the health of our souls.”

She laughed; and gulped her oysters.

“Like this – across the table from each other – you are very amusing – very dear – and completely harmless! And that is – friendship – isn’t it? In the end it is a matter of taste: my psyche sexualis is gourmet and gourmand as well. Oysters and caviar – and next to that I love Irish stew and brats – straight from the grill. But I can do without your delicacies!”

“Mine?” He asked in astonishment. “Which ones are those?”

“Red ducks!” She laughed. “Bloody – á la Knickerbocker!”

“What kind of stuff is that?” He asked again. “I have no idea, what you are talking about.”

“Oh, don’t be like that!” Cried the Diva. She took up the menu, and searched through it. “There – that’s what I mean, Red Ducks – the favorite of all the gluttons in this country! Haven’t you ever tried it?”

“Yes, certainly – they had placed it in front of him a couple of times. It was terrible. He had tasted a little bit of it once and would never again. They took a duck, and grilled it lightly. Then they put the half raw piece of breast on a plate, and put the remainder in a large silver press. They turned it and pressed the blood out over everything.

“What in the world do I have to do with that?” he asked.

“Never mind!” Said the Diva. “I don’t want to fight with you – especially not tonight. Everyone has their own little pleasures – as the dear Lord has created them. I want to be nice to you, Doctor – nice from a distance – but nice and cordial! Especially today – when all creeping things are gathered together. So your devilish whims have once more left you entirely alone! – Bitter, isn’t it?”

What was she talking about anyway, what did she mean?

“What is bitter?” He demanded.

She reached her hand over to him.

“Dear God – why be so secretive? Can’t the two of us talk quietly over anything – and openly? Like two old soothsayers – who understand each

other, even if they only talk with their eyes? Why should we play games? It is bitter, that your little turtledove has flown away, isn't it?"

"My little turtledove?" He said. "Do you mean Fräulein Jefferson?"

She laughed:

"Naturally! Who else? You are alone – and an English birdcage hangs upon the Christmas tree of your ex-fiancé!"

"Who says that?" He asked.

"Who says that?" She cried. "It's in all the evening papers! With pictures! And they are now engaged at this very hour – thirty blocks away – little Ivy with the Duke of Stratford. You should have known better Doctor – you might have waited a little – at least until after the wedding!"

He became impatient.

"Dear God – what should I have known better?" He cried heavily.

She looked him in the eye.

"What? Well, that the little doll over there would never do, things – that even I wouldn't do. So there! Now you know."

She laughed out loud, and turned back to her oysters.

But he didn't know at all. What had he done to Ivy? – And what had he done to this Frau?

Who was she anyway? – The greatest Diva on earth, this Frau, that had the most beautiful voice in centuries. Yes, she was very clever as well, very educated – oh, an artist in every fingertip. She didn't only sing, but also wrote, and composed. And she understood what to collect – her old paintings beat the collections of many multimillionaires. But at the same time this Frau was a connoisseur of all types of desires. She was Sappho and Catherine at the same time and her erotic library was worth many thousands – she was proud of it, to possess so many titles, many of which could not even be found in Heyn's catalogue of books in print. And everyone knew, that she took men by the dozens – and women as well. That one of the chorus directors of the Opera was solidly devoted in her service, to see that she always had fresh wares, night after night. She didn't even bother to lie about it. She stood above society in her royal excesses, indulging her – psyche sexualis.

But even she – Emmaldine Farstin – drew the line where he was concerned!

Her? – Her! What was that all about?

But it was all so silly! She was making fun of him – and he was stupid enough to fall for it!

So he smiled.

“You are completely right!” He said. Why not attempt to search inside and better ourselves, become more virtuous. I will seriously consider it.”

She answered:

“Don’t waste your time. It won’t help, when a person, like you, is inclined that way – inside themselves!”

“There she goes again,” he thought. Good enough – she can have her own way.

He nodded:

“Yes, yes!”

“I call it Sodom,” the Diva continued, “because in the and that’s what it amounts to. I have studied it thoroughly, this great chapter of love – and with my formula you can finally solve all puzzles, even when they do not appear understandable at the beginning. I can give you a very long lecture about it.”

“Please go on,” he said. “I have just come back from out west, have only seen common citizens and farmers for three months – creatures, that have only very distant similarities with people in your sense. So tell me all about it – I will gladly listen to you.”

“Thank you!” Laughed the Diva. “When I have a hangover – which I often have, when something really disgusts me – then I am highly chaste for a long time. And I study these things – that is what my books and my paintings are there for. They give me an appetite again. Then one day I discovered my formula – it is a highly simple, highly common formula. But it is never considered in the same way, that I conceive it.”

“And what is your formula?” he asked.

“In every person there is an animal,” she replied. “That and nothing else. It is such a truism, so worn out, that it sounds very foolish and silly. But it is really a most amazing discovery, when you look a little deeper into it. There is an animal – often even many animals – and they again are most delightful hybrids. There is not an animal in the entire history of nature, that is not stuck inside some human.”

He said:

“That is not entirely –”

She interrupted him quickly.

“Not entirely new – naturally not! I just told you, that it is completely old stuff! But just wait a minute. The sexual psyche is mainly nothing other than such an animal – and this animal soul searches for its own kind. Now take the teachings of reincarnation, which many hundred millions of people believe in. There is a large, thick gestalt of energy. Namely: the soul, that is always the same, transforming through an infinite series of lives – one soul, one awareness, that is always its own self. And it must be the same with frogs and lions, as it is with kings and beggars, with nuns and whores. If that is correct, then it must also follow, that all frog souls are individual, like all lion souls. But they are common to each other – one hundred souls can have the same characteristics. Like all insect souls and rabbit souls can be the same – and yet at the same time be very different from the souls of other species. And don’t all these souls have their origin in the same Source, the frog soul and the beggar soul, the lion soul and the carp soul. Do you understand? – And the higher a creature stands – the more souls it will have inside it. Goethe thought that two souls lived in his breast – but when you read him, you find, that there are not two, but two hundred – at the very least!”

“What do you call – soul?” He interrupted.

“Just what it is!” She said. “The – sex instinct! There are two instincts that motivate all living creatures, according to doctrine, those of self-preservation and procreation. That is absurd, of course, because no creature ever thinks about procreation – it is the sex instinct, nothing else! If we want to differentiate between the body and the soul, then it is clear, that it is the body, which wants to preserve itself, to drink, to eat, to live, to remain healthy. But there remains the other part – the soul – only the sex instinct! The body is very mortal, and perishes after a short time – its purpose, which it alone serves, is also just as small and pathetic, as it is itself. But the soul is immortal – and so is its emanation – it’s instinct! Its drive and purpose is immortal like its own soul – to populate an entire world. That is the purpose of life on this earth – to fill it and fill it with even more creatures – so that souls can always find new bodies, to live inside and to dwell inside for a little while.”

“If that is the purpose of life,” he opined, “then you have been very successful in avoiding it! You have brought many sacrifices for your – soul instinct, but have not done anything at all for procreation!”

She said very seriously:

“Is that what you believe, doctor? It is completely true: that the time, which it takes to bear a child, seems much too long for me to do without what I consider is my life’s purpose. And yet I imagine that I do more for this purpose, then twenty thousand women together.”

“What do you mean?” He asked.

She said:

“Go to the opera sometime when I am singing – or when Caruso is singing! But don’t look at the stage, just look at the audience. Observe the eyes of the people, those eyes – as the lust of all animals awakens in them. They don’t say it, they don’t understand it – they just feel it and don’t know what it is. But their passion flames up and fills the entire theater. And then they go back home, and lie with one another, and beget children: my children, Caruso’s children!”

She laughed out loud:

“Then the people say: ‘That voice! Farstin’s voice! So divine, so heavenly! – And Caruso – the most majestic of them all – oh, what a revelation!’ But the females feel it with him: their eyes shut, and they lie down, enraptured.” It is the men with me: ‘So feminine, so feminine!’ – Only you know, they don’t feel their emotions as forcefully, as I express them. Emotions, which even the most common citizen feels: genuine, perfect, and vulgar. That is a great revelation to them! – And the joke of it is, that it really is a revelation, and a most genuine one, which awakens their souls!”

“Then, Diva, your divinity,” he said, “your song is nothing more, then cantharides!

“Entirely correct!” She nodded. “It is celery for the bridegroom and asparagus for the bride! It is champagne or a low-cut dress, a smutty book, a savage dance – a couple of dogs, enjoying themselves! – nothing else at all – I am completely clear about it. It is sex – sex! And I believe that, there are many animal souls that scream out from me, when I prostitute myself on the stage and in the concert hall, and that is how I awaken so many different desires in my audience! I’ve often thought about it, as I waited in the wings for my cue, while Caruso was singing. Sometimes he is a bull, then an ape – then a boar and then a nightingale cock. And the little gray nightingale souls stretch their heads, the cows stop their chewing, the she apes roll their eyes and the sows become restless with lust.”

“And there is nothing human?” He asked. “Nothing?”

She sighed:

“Rarely, very rarely! – There are so many millions more animals in the world than human beings! And human souls migrate also, just like the others – some even finding dwelling places inside animals. So it becomes very difficult, to find a human soul in a human body!”

She offered him a cigarette from her case, and lit one herself.

“We have to console ourselves,” she continued, “the entire world is Sodom and we live in it! We are animals and must search for animals like us – and so it has always been since the egg of Leda!”

He took it up.

“She had the soul of a swan – that’s why Zeus came to her as a swan.”

She nodded.

“And to Europa as a bull, because she was a cow! But the handsome youth Ganymede, whose young dreams flew up into the clouds – was seduced by him in the shape of an eagle. That was the way of the gods in every country and in all times. Odin approached Gunnlod, the giant’s daughter, as a dragon, and the holy Virgin was visited by a dove. I don’t know what Loki’s giant wife looked like, but she must have been a strange beast if he could beget the Fenris wolf and the world snake with her. And such hybrids run around everywhere: fruit of the embrace between God or human and animal – Sodom from the beginning in every religion! You say, they are fantasies, fairytales – yes! But they at least prove, how very much human thought is always preoccupied with them. The Indian, Egyptian, and Babylonian mythologies are full of such hybrid creatures. And our own no less: just read the revelation of St. John! Hellas had her centaurs and fauns, sirens and nymphs – all true children of Sodom, like the Minotaur who was begotten of the union between Pasiphae and her bull. Do you believe that all the strange, weird stories that exist wherever there are human beings, are simply invented? They are only possible, because – since ancient times – the human has mated with animals! – You were once an attorney, Doctor – so tell me: are such acts so rare these days?”

He shook his head.

“They happen everywhere, in all countries, and every day. But they only rarely get into the courts – because they always take place in secrecy and seldom enough come into the light. Thank God!”

“I have cut out several articles,” she said, “that I occasionally find in the newspapers. In Chicago seven Chinese kept a swine – as a wife. They

fattened it up, and later devoured it – presumably as an expression of their love. In Berlin I knew a government consul that stuck chicken feathers in his poor Frau's hair because she clucked so loudly. His chicken soul was so proud of her that he crowed about her like Chanteler. And I know that Professor Harriman from Baltimore has lived with a chimpanzee for years – on scientific grounds, because he wants, to explore the psyche of the animal."

"God yes!" He laughed. "There is no Calabrian goatherd, none in the Pyreneans or the Pampas, that doesn't make love to one of his goats! – Commonness makes love – that's what it is! You must take it comically, like Frederick the second took it. Where he passed judgment – and the document still exists – in which a Hussar was damned to death, because he had sex with his mare. Then King scribbled on the edge:

"The fellow should have been placed in the infantry!"

She said:

"He knew the difference, that king! You know, what his friend Voltaire told of him? That he loved his greyhounds –"

"I know!" He interrupted her. "But he is no crown witness – Voltaire!"

"Entirely correct," she nodded, "and besides, bitch greyhounds are not his type of animal. He is much more like a wild stallion – a royal animal everywhere."

She recited:

"Zu Berlin im alten Schlosse
Sehen wir in Stein gemetzt,
Wie ein Weib mit einem Rosse
Sodomitisch sich ergötzt.

Und man sagt, daß diese Dame

Die erlauchte Ahnfrau ward
Unseres Fürstensamms –”

[In an old castle in Berlin

We see chiseled in stone
How a woman with a steed
Pleasured herself through sodomy.

And they say, that this Lady

Was the noble ancestor
Of our royal lineage –”]

“Heine!” He cried. “Don’t believe that poet quite so much! Alfred de Musset says exactly the same thing – and much more positively – about his girlfriend Georges Sand.”

“And she was from the Wettiner tribe,” she replied. “Was an ancestor of Marschalls Moritz of Saxon. Royal blood – a noble steed in Dresden just like in Berlin!” Do you believe that? What does believe mean?

I can very well imagine, that the poetess, Georges Sand, with her wild hair styles, preferred a stallion! The King Wiswamitra, loved a cow for years. Every Rococo marquise must have her little lap dog. Beginning with the golden ass of Apuleius and down through a thousand and one nights, Boccaccio and the queen of Navarre considered Titania’s ear bearer a very desirable lover, much more so than any others. When Nelson died, a large Newfoundland took his place with beautiful Lady Hamilton – and the English fashion of the white Angora cat has many enthusiastic friends here in New York. Whatever they want – I know more than one house in this city, where good money can buy whatever the heart desires: girls and boys and goats and ducks and asses – anything, anything! – Why should I not believe, what I have seen with my own eyes!”

“Good, good,” he cried, “that might well be! But you must admit, that despite all that you say, they are vanishing exceptions, and that for the most part the sex drive of a human does not in any way turn to animals!”

The Diva shook her head back and forth.

“Yes – and no!” She said. “I am not entirely clear about it. The natural explanation – the simplest – is that a cat soul in a human body must search for a Tomcat. The Tomcat – as he is – with tail and paws and whiskers. But here it becomes complicated: she doesn’t long for the Tomcat – but longs for the soul of the Tomcat, that alone. And very unconsciously at that, very instinctively. Not even the smallest part of the human brain can help her with that. On the contrary it leads her in the opposite way, whenever it can. So it is, that in many millions of cases the poor soul chiefly doesn’t know why , but it is searching for something, groping in the dark through a long physical life, longing and yearning and never knowing, for what! – But she finds it through some coincidence in another person, a soul like hers – then she is happy – and doesn’t know why! But otherwise she gives it to, an ape,

or fox or swan or even a Guinea pig! – You can see it every day, and in all marriages, everywhere! And that is the funniest thing about the entire story; that such marriages and such loves – simply because human bodies are involved – are considered normal and very natural, even though they are really against nature – and they are the real sodomitic matings! And that which mankind calls Sodomy – where souls of the same kind have found their mates – is the genuinely natural and normal thing!"

She stood up, and let him help with her furs.

"I thank you, Doctor," she concluded, "for listening to me so politely. Give it some thought, when you have the time – it is very stimulating! It has already whetted my appetite – I'm looking forward to the little lovebird, that is waiting for me under my Christmas tree: I think it will lose a couple of feathers on this holy night!"

They went out into the hall, and waited a moment, while the doorman whistled for her auto.

Then she spoke again:

"Many animal souls dwell inside of me, that is certain. I love all of them, those that are large and strong and savage and beautiful! The bull and the stallion, the eagle and the swan and the wolf."

She became silent, and it seemed, as if she was waiting for a reproach – or a confirmation.

He hesitated. Then he said it, almost forced into it, very slowly.

"Then I am not any of those animals?"

Her eyes blazed at that. Then she cried out – and it seemed as if she wanted to spit at him:

"No! No! You have the soul of an insect, or flea! A mosquito – perhaps a spider, or bat! Or anything – that sucks – that's what you are!"

Her eyes glowed in triumph.

"Auf Wiedersehen!" She nodded, left him standing, and stepped quickly out to her auto.

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He stood there, looking after her with an open mouth. He could really feel how extremely foolish, he looked in that minute –

It was like it had been that time, when he had gone to Hamburg for the first time, as a student. He had gone into the Alster Pavilion, wanting to read the newspaper; and they had told him, that he could only do that upstairs. So he had climbed up the steps. But he had scarcely come to the last step, when some people had jumped out at him – guests, waiters, house boys. And they had slapped him in the face, had boxed his ears, and had hit him – and he had flown down the steps in a somersault. He had taken an artificial palm and a cook with him, and had ended up under a marble table and a couple of chairs. He had pulled his bones back together, gotten back up with a great effort, and had stood there – with an open mouth –

Exactly like now.

Then the guests and waiter had come – a large crowd had surrounded him. It had all been a mistake, an unfortunate misunderstanding. There was someone else, that had looked very similar to him –

Yes, it had been about some something that the other had done – he hadn't really understood, what. But he had received a slap in the face for it – a very powerful slap in the face.

They had brushed him off, had tried to console him, and had spoken to him. Could he ever excuse them –

Then one of them had laughed. They had all laughed – him as well. It really was kind of comical.

But he had gone away with a slap in the face. It had really burned.

Exactly like now.

Only this time no one came up and asked for forgiveness. And there was no friendly laughter.

There was no mistake, no misunderstanding. She knew it was him, him and no one else. And she spit on him, right in the middle of his face –

A page came with his fur coat. He slowly went out to the street.

A bus stopped at the corner, and he climbed in. Then he noticed for the first time, that it was going up the street and not down.

There were only two men in the bus. But one spoke to him – Doctor Samuel Cohen. He was carrying packages, like everyone else on this evening.

"Back again?" Cried the doctor. "That will certainly make your bride happy!"

Frank Braun nodded – good, good – he had not yet read the evening paper – and would not ask him any questions.

“Where are you going this evening?” He asked quickly.

The doctor said:

“To your old friend. She is only having a few people there, Professor von Kachele, Tewes, me – and still two or three others. Shall I give her your regards? Shall I greet her for you.”

“Yes – yes,” he nodded. “Greet all my friends for me. – How is Frau van Ness?”

“Better now, really much better!” Replied Doctor Cohen. “I sent her to Saratoga for a couple of months, and that helped a little. Anyway – she is still very anemic.”

He stood up, and held out his hand. “I must get off – and go over to Park Avenue! Happy Holidays!”

The other man also got off, leaving his newspaper.

Frank Braun took it up, and quickly glanced through it. There it was – there was the picture. A big photograph of Ivy spread over an entire page, and on the other page her parents; then the Duke, who looked splendid, in khaki – really a young hero!, There was his own picture as well – above in the corner – a little medallion, the size of a half dollar.

He crumpled the paper, and threw it to the floor.

Central Park – to the left. There was the Jefferson house now, on the other side –

The curtains were drawn but he could see the light behind the windows and it all looked very festive – Christmas, and an engagement: little round wreaths under all the windows. Holly with red berries and red bows. He got off at the next corner. Stopped a minute, looked around, sighed quickly and softly. Pulled his collar up, and buried his hands deep in his pockets. He whistled a student song, and stomped across the wet asphalt.

Bitter? – Farstin was wrong. He wished them all the happiness in the world – every one of them gathered up there in the massive stone mansion. Ivy, her Duke, her father and her mother. And even the general Consul – he was certainly up there celebrating the engagement.

He was alone – alone again, like the Diva had said. But also: free – once more! Free and alone – wasn’t it the same thing in the end? – He, the only person who was alone tonight in this giant city.

Nobody would give him a kind word, tonight on Christmas Eve. His mother – it had certainly been her Christmas greetings in the envelope. But the English censor had most likely lit his cigar with it –

So he had no one to be grateful to. His Christmas presents were slaps in the face, which the Diva had spit into his face.

"It was too bad, that he didn't have a cane! His hand itched, to give a couple of swipes through the air with –

Or a horse! – Now through the empty Park! Ivy might have done that – at least – given him the Irish bay mare that he liked to ride so much. Nothing exceptional about it, but she jumped, jumped! What would it have mattered to her – she never rode it, and had better animals, more than a dozen.

But instead: her letter! No greeting – not even an address. It was a Christmas present like that of the singer: a stinging slap in the face!

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One shop window was still brightly lighted: at Cartier's. He stopped and looked in. A lady was buying something – a ring, or perhaps it was a watch.

The lady paid, and took her little box. She came out, and stepped right past him.

That – that was – Dolores! That was Goyita –

She stopped – recognized him. Trembled, screamed out, and lifted her skirts. She ran, fled across the street. Tore open the door of a taxi, and jumped in. It was gone –

Quickly, quickly – before he really knew, what had happened.

Still another slap in the face, he thought. That was his third Christmas present.

He stepped back, to the shop window – there was a mirror on the other side. He looked into it.

"I am like a leper," he thought. "Like a man infested with the plague!"

They turned off the light inside – and he continued on. But the face in the mirror ran in front of him, backwards – so that he was always staring at it.

He saw fear – and desire.

But he didn't know, what he desired, and didn't know, what he feared.

Hadn't he been glad to be alone – free of everything? Just a few minutes ago?

He walked on, further.

Wind and rain. And his steps, his resounding steps on the stone pavement. Clack and clack.

Union Square – a confused tangle. Broken fences, deep holes and huge stone piles. Wooden sheds, picket fences, streetlights in between and bare trees. A couple of broken down benches – and a statue. Rats.

There was a singing through the wet wind. It came somewhere from out of a hole in the earth where they were building the new subway. Sounds of childhood, dreaming silence –

"O Tannenbaum, oh Tannenbaum –"

No, not the words – just the melody.

He stood there, listening. Ah, the old battle song of the Irish in this country!

"Old Germany! Old Germany!

When do you set old Ireland free?"

But it sounded like it came from out of the grave.

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Lücho's. White covered tables, empty chairs. Not a single guest.

Then young Rossius came up to him, and shook his hand.

"You have kept me waiting for a long time, Doctor!" He cried. "I have been sitting here at least two hours."

"Is it really that late?" He said. "Excuse me. But sit down – tell me, what has been going on in New York while I've been gone."

The other fidgeted nervously. Sighed very audibly, and then pulled out his watch.

"Well, what is it?" Asked Frank Braun.

"I have an invitation," said Rossius. "Around midnight – I have promised, to be punctual. It is now already –"

"A new Fräulein bride?" He laughed. "Well, she can wait."

The other said:

"It is not a new Fräulein bride – I don't have any brides anymore – either old ones or new ones. I have been invited – you know her, Herr Doctor."

He understood in an instant.

“Ah – with Aimée, right? Do you have a pretty present for her?”

The secretary reached into his pocket, and pulled out a manuscript, handed it over to him.

On the cover was typed neatly: The Pearl Necklace. – A cycle of sonnets. And underneath: to Aimée B.

“So you wrote a poem about her pearls!” He cried. “Why not about her feet? Many women have pearls, but only Aimée Breitauer has such beautiful feet.”

“I have written in praise of those – often enough,” replied Ernst Rossius.

“Her feet and eyes and lips – everything! She already has over forty poems of mine – she wants to publish them, when there are enough for a volume. On the finest Japanese vellum – bound in silver gray leather!”

So much youth, so much happiness in those blue eyes –

“Run,” he cried, “run, fly to her!”

“Till tomorrow!” Cried Ernst Rossius. He ran, and disappeared in an instant.

He sat down, and ordered his beer. In the next room an enormous Christmas tree towered high to the ceiling; and in the back he could hear the soft Christmas songs of the band. Everything was there that was important and belonged to Christmas time.

Only – there was no scent of wax, no aroma of burned pine branches. Electric bulbs hung in this tree.

And the songs, the German songs, that wafted through the room, made him sick. He waved to the waiter, and gave him money for the band – to make them quit. But the waiter thought, that since it was already midnight, the musicians would go home anyway.

He sat there and waited. Someone might still come, one of the many guests, that frequented this place. Perhaps one of them was also alone in this night –

Like he was –

No one came.

The band left. Then the people from the bar and the bartender – one after the other.

Only one still remained – the one that served him. He waited. Glued to the wall – tall, thin and narrow – a large, reproachful exclamation mark!

Frank Braun thought: he has a Frau. Has children – that are also waiting.

No one was waiting for him.

He paid, and sent the waiter away. He remained sitting, staring at his glass, which he had not touched –

He sat there.

The waiter passed several times. Frank Braun waved him over, gave him cigarettes and a couple of dollars. Then waved him, to be quiet, when he looked like he wanted to speak.

The man was fat, and red in the face. He had already celebrated, he thought, earlier that evening.

And he sat there, staring into space.

Then he stood up, and went to the telephone. Purely mechanical – almost without will.

Called her number – heard her voice.

“Lotte –” he spoke.

And he heard: “Come –”

Nothing else.

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But he didn’t go.

He went back to his place, sat down again in front of his stale beer.

Sat there –

No – no – he didn’t want to go to her. He was afraid.

He had already received three presents this Christmas – three, and that was enough. From Ivy. From Farstin. And from the dancer. Three presents. And all of the same kind.

Stinging slaps in the face –

But why? Why?

And he sat – sat – through the late night –

He crawled back home in the dawn. And fell into his bed.

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No, he did not go to Lotte van Ness. He stayed home day after day, working with his secretary. He felt dull, tired and empty. He slept a lot, through entire nights – and for hours more, even in the middle of the day.

He lay on the sofa, playing chess with Rossius one afternoon, when her car came up. She did not ask Fred to announce her, but stepped immediately into the room. Was there.

Stood, took off her fur coat. Sat down.

No explanation, no scene. She acted as if she had been there only yesterday – as if it were all perfectly natural and could not be any other way.

She chatted, spoke with his secretary, and watched the chess game, that slowly proceeded. He didn't speak a word.

He lifted his bishop, with which he was going to make the next move. And forgot to set it down, held it fast in his hand. Listened, to what she said; and forgot, to listen – glanced over at her – for a long time.

Then finally forgot, to look at her. Sank back – dreaming, in the twilight.

Finally slept.

A red veil – always just red. Red rose petals – red rain – red blood.

And fear, fear – such raging fear –

He screamed – and awoke from his own scream. Jumped up with a start. Took a couple of steps, and stood there. Staring around him.

He was alone – there was no one in the room except him.

But her scent was there – soft – sweet – Jicky.

What had happened? What had she done? He saw blood – so much blood –

He felt something pressed into his hand –

The knife – yes, of course – the little knife.

She had had it – and he had torn it away from her. That was it –

He opened his fingers. It fell down, onto the carpet, at his feet –

No knife – the chess piece –

There was a loud sound outside – and again he shivered violently. No – it was a car horn.

Then there was a step in the hall. His secretary came back.

"Where is she?" He whispered. "Where is – Frau van Ness?"

He answered:

“I have just brought her to her auto. She didn’t want to wake you up – you were sleeping so soundly. He picked up the chess piece.

“Would you like to play some more, doctor? It is your move.”

Frank Braun didn’t answer. He looked at the other, watchfully, suspiciously –

Then he felt a light pain. On his shoulder – under his arm. No – it was further back. No, no – in the middle of his breast –

He tore off his jacket and vest, shoes, trousers and shirt. Looked around for it on his body, searching –

Found nothing. He felt himself carefully all over from top down.

The wound, where was the wound?

He ran across to the bathroom. Stood in front of the large mirror. He turned his head around, and searched his back.

Nothing – nothing. He closed his eyes. Then why did it hurt?

But he could not feel it anymore. And the secretary followed after him.

“What is wrong, doctor?” He said. “What are you doing?”

He said:

“I have been – poked. Perhaps some insect has bitten me.!”

Rossius turned on a couple more lights, until the bathroom was flooded with bright light. He searched around, and shook his head. Then said:

“You are dreaming, doctor.”

Then he felt it again. No pain – only a sting and an itch. And not in one place – everywhere over his skin. Clammy – and cold.

He shivered, and his teeth clattered.

“My clothes!” He stuttered. “It is cold in here.”

“Cold?” Said Rossius.

“It is at least 20° C!”

They went back and he got dressed. Could he trust the youth? – Oh, Rossius would betray him – in a moment. Not for money – certainly not, but for a kiss from painted lips.

Cautiously he asked:

“How long was I asleep?”

“A good hour!” Replied the other.

Frank Braun remained silent for a while. He sat down, moved his chessman. And made an effort, to be indifferent. And then finally began:

“You went out didn’t you? I saw you go out while Frau van Ness was here? – Did you take care of the letters ?”

“No,” answered the secretary.” They are still lying there. I was never out of the house, we both sat here talking in a low voice so we would not disturb you –”

He screamed at him:

“You are lying! – You are lying! You left me alone with – with –” his voice gave out, his hands clenched. – He wanted to grabbed his throat, strangle, strangle him –

His secretary stood up – his face – pale.

He didn’t speak a syllable.

Frank Braun looked at him – helplessly, pleadingly, bewildered.

The other understood quite well. Sat back down. Moved his Bishop.

And they played on. Silently.

One game. Then another –

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They went out, late at night. Down Broadway. Just wandering.

Ernst Rossius spoke. Telling of his life’s great adventure – of beautiful Aimée.

He listened, with half an ear, while at the same time looking around at the rushing traffic.

Tenderloin. Manhattan’s best.

The theater emptied itself. Fur coats and top hats. Colorful evening gowns and diamonds. Autos, thousands of autos.

Prostitutes? If there were any – you could not pick them out in this crowd. Every lady looked like a street prostitute – painted, with makeup, on lips, on eyes and ears decorated with colorful jewelry.

And even the men had makeup, those that came out of the theaters last, walking up and down, and lounging under the bright show windows. Chorus men, arm in arm, monkeys, dressed in Ragtime, sick and rotting. pathetic outcasts – that ruled Broadway around this time of night. And found lovers – in spite of everything.

Then, further down, the sailors. Strapping boys, sunburned, powerful, healthy, clean washed. walking up-and-down – like the chorus boys. for sale just like them – only cheaper.

Women too – only Jewesses’s in this area – who came over from the East side, slowly the German prostitutes arrived. They ran around from here – up to about 80th St.

Every area of the city, every precinct as well, carried its own character: it broke out in the night – Negro women over there – Greek fellows on the other side. Then the Irish quarter, Italians, Hungarians. You could purchase any nationality in this city. Could get Armenians, Cubans, Bohemians. French, or English, as many as you wanted, girls from Canada, from Syria and Romania –

What a market! – Cheap, cheap! One dollar apiece!

Oh yes, Farstin was right. You could buy every vice here – like the red apples in the fruit stands on the street corners.

The apple doesn't taste good," thought Frank Braun. "It is mealy and tart – like lukewarm water. Like their sins as well – the climate makes it that way!"

They took a taxi, and drove back to the Plaza Hotel, drank champagne in the grill, and watched the dancing. Then to the Biltmore, to the Maxim and to the Ritz. It was the same everywhere – Foxtrot, Lame-duck, Hesitation, Ragtime – always the same. The same syncopated beat – exactly the same syncopated pyrotechnics of the bands.

The people danced without stopping. There were always two bands – one set up as soon as the other had finished. They danced, danced – without feeling, without emotion. It was just a step, only a turn – a movement – that made you sweat. A movement, that was always deliberate, always controlled – always concerned over the next beat of the melody.

Always restrained, never a rushing of blood, never flesh, that wanted to break out leaping and grinding. As if a Sunday school teacher sat somewhere, strict and envious, beating the fingers of the children with his hard ruler, because they should be still as mice and sitting straight up. Holding them on a leash, like tame monkeys, that feared the whip.

Priestly morals in the dance hall – syncope!

The two of them went down to the "Nachtasyl". Everything was German in this locale, whose clever barkeeper's thunderous terrible racket melted thick bars of gold. National songs, one after the other – that wafted through the entire locale. Little operettas in between, then verses from Hindenburg and McKenzie and the Kaiser, aimed at the common English and Italian foolishness. And the drunken public laughed and cried and rejoiced in transformation, found very gripping, what there was to grip, and comical, what should be comical. They went along with what was

happening at all the tables, drank wine and beer and champagne, kissed the German and Jewish girls, that ran around and sat on their knees.

Franz, the piano player, hammered at his piano, battling in despair, pitting his skill against the guests. He never succeeded, and always had to break off a piece and play the melody, which the others bellowed at him. They thought, that, it was still the day of the roses – that it was – the day of the Ro – ses – and they screamed it out with such crashing energy, so that no one there dared to doubt.

– “Now where?” Asked Frank Braun.

Ernst Rossius pulled out his watch.

“It’s already 6 o’clock! I have just enough time, to go back home and take a bath. Then I must go to the newspaper office.

So it was back home.

He went up the stairs, and unlocked the house door. Through the hall and to his rooms. He stood there, and hesitated – something was moving inside. And a light shone through the curtains. He listened intently. A soft sound – as if someone was moving up and down.

Fred? – But no – he had heard his rattling snoring down below from the staircase.

Softly he inserted the key. Turned it, and opened the door with a jerk.

Lotte stood in front of him.

In the soft perfume – of many glowing roses.

Chapter Fourteen: Obsidians

There is a substance, and only one, which reveals all secrets to you. Powdered obsidian, add to it myrrh, flakes of talcum and resin tears of the pine. Mix it and drink it in red wine: Then you will see the root of all things."

–Lithica des Orpheus. IV century AD

During this time he wrote a type of journal. He locked it carefully, and only got it out, when he was alone and certain of not being disturbed. Then he made his entries. He began with the history of his disease. He searched through his memories, over and over, probing and searching, bringing everything together, that had anything to do with his affliction. He wrote it all down, at first randomly, then arranging it, searching for the connections.

It had begun in Europe, many months before he left. An unrest, impatience, and irritation of all his nerves. A longing for something –

Something, that had lain inside him, since –

No, he didn't know, since when.

But he could remember a time, when it had not been there. Where he had enjoyed, what the hour brought. He had been strong and simple, self-evident, animalistic. Magnificently animalistic, he thought.

It grew slowly. Very slowly and very gradually. Then it took possession of him, and wouldn't let him go. It made him restless and impatient, and in the end it drove him away from home.

And it became still, calm and encapsulated itself – when he was overseas for a long time.

When he drank the heat of the tropics, wandered through forgotten cities that had been destroyed by the jungle, when he breathed the solitude of the desert and his longing desire bathed in the infinity of the oceans – then he was at rest, and it gave him new power for another year in the homeland.

He had done it once, twice and then again: had come back home, hard as steel.

When he thought about it – no, it was not really an illness. It was – and only in the worst case – just a tendency, in which some poison wanted to grow.

The old remedies had always helped, even the last time.

Because he had been healthy – or almost healthy – on that day in Antofagasta. Barely anything had remained of it – just something soft, strange, yielding and savage. On that day, when he had watched the sea lions, chasing after the schools of herring, racing through the silver waves into the harbor of Antofagasta. On the day, when the first streaks of lightning had flashed across the sky at home, as the screams had raced around the world, through the cables in the oceans and across nations, through the air in radio waves: the wild screams of the assassination at Sarajevo –

Then the fever ship and the yellow death. The snail's crawl up the West Coast – then – across the states. And the war, the war –

He had not had any symptoms at all during that time. If he had really been sick then – if the poisonous germs of some disease had already been inside him – they had not yet appeared. Or at least: he hadn't seen them – had been blind and dumb – paying attention only to the lightning flashes, that were thick around him – and all around the world.

He had first sensed it in New York; that he was sick, and during those first weeks, when he had found her again: Lotte Lewi.

And one thing was certain: there was some connection between this Frau and his disease. Also with others – perhaps! But most certainly with her.

But what disease? He brought all the particulars together, combined them; wrote them down, and compared what every single doctors had said who had examined him. Their diagnosis were exactly the same; he was completely healthy, his hearts, lungs, and kidneys – everything. There was only an apathy, a small nervous illness. Presumably psychological in nature – it was the war! Only one of them, Doctor Samuel Cohen, had at least made an attempt, to go deeper. He had mentioned the possibility, that perhaps it was an obscure tropical disease –

But it was only conjecture, vague and fantastic, not based on facts. He wrote all of them down, anyway, word for word. Read them through, weighing them and judging them – and in the end couldn't make anything out of them.

So that was the picture of his condition which for the most part had remained the same through all these years:

First a fatigue. But one, that was not common fatigue, that did not go away after sleep. Yes, it was often the reverse: just after he had slept, for a long time, deeply and solidly – it lasted through nights and even through days – it was especially then that he felt so tired and dull. His sleep was, as it had always been, peaceful, calm, deep and dreamless. Only once in a while now, when he was stressed, terrifying dreams would slip inside.

These dreams – perhaps he could find a clue in them. He decided to write them down, one after the other. But first he wanted to get a clearer picture of the disease itself with all of its appearances.

So there was the constant fatigue. It often came on very suddenly, taking over him in an instant. Then again at other times it would work up slowly, gradually taking possession of his poor body. There were times that he didn't listen, when someone spoke to him, or, he heard different words, but didn't understand their meaning. Also times, when he himself could not continue speaking, and remained stuck in the middle of a sentence, and some name, some word, or a whole sentence was lost. It was a sudden suspension of his memory.

Sometimes, if it was a quick attack: there was a sudden dizziness, like the time, when he almost fell from his horse in Torreon. It was a fainting, a trembling, a paralysis, that robbed him of mastery of his limbs. Then again it was a twilight lasting for long hours and even days, a feeling of emptiness, of being squeezed out, a miserable wilting inside and a fading away.

At other times he would sleepwalk. Once his secretary had discovered him sleepwalking and a few times the old servant had as well. And it had certainly happened many more times, which no one knew about.

These attacks varied greatly in their severity. At times they seized only his body, leaving his brain completely free, so that he could observe the symptoms exactly. Then other times they appeared to confuse his brain – or perhaps just a part of it. There were a couple of times, when he stood in front of an audience, in the middle of speech. His lips continued speaking, mechanically forming the familiar words. But he felt, that something was missing, that he was not crossing over the bridge, that a mighty wall had grown up between him and the people down below in the audience.

And finally there were also times, when a severe attack took both: body and brain at the same time. There were times, when he didn't feel sick – and

yet didn’t feel healthy either. Then he did everything as usual, but like a machine, like a vegetable, indifferent, empty and cold.

Really, in between these attacks, he felt healthy, and pulsing with life. He felt young, powerful, blooming and strong. Those were rare enough. Yesterday it had taken him an immense effort, just to stick out his hand, and today he could swim for hours and then sit in the saddle again for hours.

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His appearance? Well, he looked good, when he felt healthy. And ghastly when he was sick. Everyone could see it, especially those whom he often got together with. They could immediately tell how it was going with him on that day. “You look like sour beer and spit,” Rossius had once said! But then there were times – and the others rarely saw this – something very strange would express itself in his face. Once in a while it would appear to him – he had seen it very clearly on Christmas night – in Cartier’s window mirror, when the Goyita had stepped out of the store.

It was something alien and very strange.

Now, as he was writing his notes, he often sat in front of the mirror, looking into it for long periods of time. Studying, searching –

Something was in his features, something that had not been there before.

But now it was always there, even when he felt completely healthy. There was a faint expression of uncertainty – and at the same time of some desire. But it grew, became very palpable and clear, when this tiredness seized him, distorted his face, and turned it into a bizarre mask, especially if it was a strong attack.

Then his uncertainty became a faint fear, and that little fear grew into downright terror. His craving for something became a greed, a savage greed and a need.

And there was a third thing, that became stronger now with every passing day –

It was: the expression of hopeless despair.

He understood that, understood it very well. It was despair – because he didn’t understand anything about his fear or desire!

Desire for what? Fear of what?

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He was completely clear about it, all the stuff, which he devoured and injected, was not healing him. He had begun with the smallest doses of strychnine, first as a powder, then later in pills. Then he had tried morphine, muscarine, digitalis, atropine and cocaine – each kept him on his feet for a little while. Heroine only helped him a little bit, and opium seemed completely pointless. When he smoked it, he soon fell asleep, dreaming. And later he woke up, just as sick as before, only feeling worse than before. Arsenic kept him fresh for many hours, and mescal did the same, if he took it in small doses.

But even in the best case all of those could only postpone an imminent attack – never prevent it. They could make him – for one day and then for another, or perhaps for even a week – into a real human, which he always was, but no longer than that. They could save him for an evening, on which he had to give a speech, or make him capable of some wild ride – that was all.

It gave his nerves a greater resistance power, until they, in some sudden attack – collapsed pathetically together.

They were stimulants – nothing else.

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It was only his imagination, that he thought, that human touch sometimes helped. It was just an obsession, an autosuggestion.

That time when he sank from his horse, by the iron gate in front of Villa's garden, he had let the reins fall, and he had slumped forward helplessly – and the vigorous touch of the officer's hand had revived him. He remembered quite clearly, how he had sensed the warm pressure, in an instant all his senses had come back to him. His thighs had again gripped the horse; his hands had again gripped the reins –

And hadn't the same thing happened in Philadelphia – during the debate against Livingstone? He had been so burnt out, so empty, so

completely lost – and had then drank new strength from the Diva's red painted lips!

It had been the same way with little Ivy – the touch of her young body had made him strong. And the more tender she was, the more naked she snuggled against him, the more he had felt the life awaken inside him.

But he had the same sensation with Lotte, and with her it was much, much stronger. If just her cheek brushed against him, if her little hand softly nestled in his –

Her pulse – her pulse –

He only needed to close his eyes, to feel it.

Could he really feel her pulse? He observed himself carefully. Made an attempt and then another.

Did he really feel it? Was it really a feeling? – Or was it nothing other than his own desire and need?

That was it, that was what confused him.

And he pushed his thought away again – his fantastic hypothesis, that human touch had some influence on his disease.

It was hallucination – autosuggestion –

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He often thought that it was tropical anemia. That was a theory that had much in its favor.

This fatigue, this desperate indifference. This wilting, this feeling of emptiness. This languishing, sudden forgetting, panting – trembling, and trouble breathing. And the beating of his heart – like a ship's screw out of water!

But then: he was not at all anemic; he had enough blood, plenty of red blood corpuscles, was entirely healthy, full of hemoglobin and oxygen.

And his lips, his gums, and his eyes – were all healthy. With not a trace of anemia.

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Nor did his dreams furnish him any clues, although, when comparing them, he was struck by the fact that they were all very much alike.

But after analysis, the form of the dream was given by the poison which he had just taken, muscarine, mescal, or whatever it was. While the contents of the dreams didn't offer anything other than a vague picture of his condition

– A horse, whose intestines were torn out by the horns of the bull. A hedgehog, that turned over a fat toad with its paws, to bite its body open and devour its eggs.

Wasn't he the toad? Wasn't he the horse?

Or the fat man, that always drank, drank?

What was that about? – Who was he?

He had the tentacles of an octopus, from out of which a female grew: sucking him out. And the judgment of the American court, that damned him, to be sucked out by an electrical machine.

Really: if it was all turned upside down. Then it could be him, that sucked and he would become thick and fat. Just as the court sentence maintained.

The object and subject reversed their roles: it was a mescal reaction.

– But the red dreams; they were free from the influence of an intoxicant, and formed vague and savage images – often lunatic ones – disguised, yet always illuminated with just two energies: fear and desire.

And even those in the end were exactly the same – and they were so easy to explain: the fear of – being sucked out – being empty, and withering away.

And again the reverse: the desire, to drink himself .

That was once more just a symptom of his disease.

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He groped everywhere in the darkness. It only became lighter, when he thought of Lotte.

And most understandably, very real and factual, was the matter of her little knives.

She had given him a little knife to take along on his trip to Mexico. Mirror smooth, without a stain.

She had written, “Carry it for me. Don’t use it, unless you need to. Bring it back to me, like it is. It will not say anything to you – but will tell everything to me.”

He followed her whim, and carried it, as she wished, in the breast pocket of his shirt.

The handle was made from platinum, and she had both of their sun signs engraved on it, the scorpion and the crab. She obviously attributed some special significance to them – that was certain.

She had said, that the little knife would show her, whether he had remained true to her. She had said that – but presumably it had lied. Or else it had an entirely different meaning in another sense altogether.

Then he had betrayed her with Aimée Breitauer at the great Festival of the Moon Ladies – and her little knife had remained brilliantly shiny. And it didn’t bother her at all, when he told her about his unfaithfulness later.

“What does that mean to me?” She had cried.

But then – on the day, when the Goyita had visited him – the little knife had become bloody. And yet – he could have sworn an oath, that he had not moved from his sofa during those hours. That he had lain there peacefully, sleeping and dreaming, dreaming heavy mescal dreams –

And yet: she didn’t believe him! The knife had become completely stained with blood, and so he was guilty! Then he must have gotten up, in the middle of his dreams, and unconsciously –

But no! Lotte van Ness herself had told him, that she had had the dancer examined. And the result: “Virgo intacta!”

Whatever her superstition was, or her foolish idea about this little knife: it couldn’t have anything to do with his faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

– And she had lied, Lotte van Ness had lied, a second time. She had allowed Doctor Cohen to give her a beautiful lancet set, with all the pretty instruments, lancets, scissors, pincers. She had told the doctor, that she wanted them for – her corns! There he had her – that was a polished, beautiful lie: she had never had corns in her entire life!

She had lied a third time. That was, when he had found her wearing the signet ring, that bore the coat of arms of the Magdeburgs.

“My mother originally came from there,” she declared to him. “That is why I bought it.”

Yet the Kübecks came from Thuringia and not from Magdeburg. It was about the image that had been engraved in the stone: a pelican, that had torn

open its own breast, to nourish its young with its own blood.

Wasn't it the same thing all over again? Drinking blood from a living body? And she sealed all of her letters to him with this stone. She never used a different one.

But she had certainly spoken the truth, when she had answered the Doctor, that the lancet set was no longer needed! – Oh yes: because on that day Ivy Jefferson had taken him away from her.

However she had kept the black box. She had said: "Perhaps later." – Later: that was, if he ever returned to her. Later – that was: now.

Yet these were not the only things, that were good for cutting or stabbing. He remembered the night when she had offered him the sleeping potion which she had finally drank herself. He had noticed a number of other knives on her nightstand – open knives with sharp shiny blades. He had intended to watch them – and had sat in bed for many hours trying to keep awake. But finally he, too, had fallen asleep and forgotten all about the knives.

However when he awoke, he had seen – a large bloodstain on Lotte's pillow.

There could be no doubt about it: the knife most certainly played a role in this fool's play. Whose chief role Lotte held and in which he somehow played a very involuntary part. A very passive one at that, one – a suffering one!

That her little knife also played a part in his dreams, was very understandable. Then the little thing, which Lotte had given him, had grown into a long, broad knife, with which he had defended himself against the slimy tentacles of the massive Kraken, which the fat man had turned into. Or the other time, when he had stood up in the night, had opened the little knife, and had gone to the bathroom table, where he had played around with the razor blades – like the time, Young Rossius had found him sleepwalking.

And there was another thing: he always saw blood – while asleep and waking – over and over again red blood. Red rose petals, that fell down, red raindrops. He saw the wound on the Goyita's white breast when she danced the Rumba – a small, narrow stripe of blood. He often saw blood – in the middle of his speeches; blood in all his dreams.

But that was understandable: when knives cut, blood must flow. And there was also, the eternal cloud of blood, that wafted across from Europe,

and colored all the newspaper pages red, day after day.

These times were very red.

– Only one thing could explain all this – that during his sleep his fantasies were occupied with blood, just like they so often were in bright daylight.

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However: these little knives were Lotte's own idea. They were there – and they must have some purpose.

But for what? What did she need them for? To use against – him? And if so why?

If she wanted them – there must be some reason behind it! – That's what he had believed, the last time she came, and chatted with his secretary, while he had been sleeping. He had believed it so strongly, that he had imagined, that he felt the pain.

So he had torn his clothes off, and searched around on his body as if looking for flea bites. But there had been nothing, nothing. There was not the slightest scratch on his skin.

Only a hallucination, overexcited nerves –

However: it was the key – her little knife.

He held it in his hand – but he did not know what to do with it.

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But she, Lotte, very well what to do with it. Often enough he had voiced his suspicions to her – and she had scarcely defended herself against them.

"Don't even try!" She had said." I don't want to say – and I won't tell you."

He had not insisted further. He knew her well enough: she would keep her word, and not speak a single syllable more about it.

Blonde Ivy had shared his suspicions. She had showed him a little calendar, in which she had clearly marked all the dates. It was like day or night – like a weather house! When he felt very healthy, then Lotte was ill.

But she was entirely healthy again, when he was seized by illness. She made him healthy and sick – whenever she wanted: and his health was somehow bound up with hers. It was, as if he didn't have his own life at all anymore. He was a doll in her little hands. Her jumping Jack. Whom she made jump.

And he permitted himself to be led by her – to do whatever she wanted. This Frau – she was the man, and not him.

"You are the earth. Are the female and the mother's womb –", weren't those her own words?

She pushed him. What he did, he did for her and through her. Ah – he actually drank in her thoughts!

And that continued, even during the times, when he didn't see her. During the long months – that he had been with Ivy.

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She was sick, weak, suffering and miserable, when he was very healthy.

Sick? – Yes, what was wrong with her then?

Anemia – poor blood! That was what Doctor Cohen was treating her for, and that was why he had sent her to Saratoga.

She had poor blood, was pale and anemic. And naturally she wanted to try every possible means of getting fresh, good blood. That was why she had gone to the resort, took arsenferatose, hematogen, Levico water, and somatose – anything that contained iron and arsenic. In order to make up for the lack of hemoglobin and oxygen in her blood.

And she was infected by the wild superstition of this country. She chased around from one soothsayer to another, had horoscopes cast by the dozens. Only she took it seriously, scientifically, in the European way, going into the depths, where the others remained at the surface. She herself had studied all the old mystics, and had taken Professor Kachele into her employ for that reason. She might smile at a thousand absurd theories, but she believed in the thousand and first.

What had Doctor Kachele said?

"Anything is possible in the human brain."

– And that was the irrefutable truth and the Doctor himself was living proof.

Him – and the world war: wasn't that also raging lunacy – born from human brains?

But then: how was it so surprising, that this Frau searched after a cure for her own disease – a cure worlds removed from all medical science?

That she should search after it – and – perhaps! – Find it?

She wore a little crystal ball on a gold chain around her neck – a winged griffen had been engraved into it. The professor immediately recognized the meaning of the amulet: it was supposed to bring milk. And she had nodded:

"Yes, yes – red milk!"

Red milk? That had to be: blood and nothing else.

Whether she really believed in it are not, she at least toyed with the idea, that much was certain. There was no question about it, any means was good enough, if it genuinely provided more healthy "milk" – red milk!

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He remembered the lecture that professor von Kachele had told them. Of the old myth of the Star Goddess, who stole the child of the sun and dismembered it. This savage, ancient story, that ran through thousands of years and existed in all peoples and in all times. Babylon's Labartu, Sidons Astarte, the horrible Durga of the Indians – always the same Goddess in Rome and Carthage, and throughout Asia, Africa and Europe. She always found new followers, priests and priestesses, and always demanded new bloody sacrifices.

And finally this cult had also found its way to America. Hadn't he already seen, with his own two eyes, how Adelaide, the beautiful Negress, with the blue priestess headband wrapped around her forehead, had slaughtered her own child in a voodoo temple at Petit Goaves? Had sacrificed it to the goddess – whom she called Dom Pédre? Strangled it, cut its throat, and drank its blood –

She, the Mamaloi – the mother and the Queen!

This was no fantasy of his imagination, no dream of overworked nerves. It was the most naked reality – in the middle of these enlightened times –

These marvelous times – that wracked its brain, in order to discover new and more powerful ways, to kill people, to make the blood flow in ever wilder streams. On the water and under the water – on the land and high in the air!

Murder – and death! It was a new rebirth of the powerful and destroying Goddess cult!

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No, what the Mamaloi had done, was nothing special in these days: anything was possible in the human brain!

Possible with her – and possible with Lotte van Ness.

The words of the learned Baron rang in his years:

“And if this beautiful and kind lady, who sits here in front of us, should suddenly reveal herself tonight as the most savage priestess of Baaltis, if she should dismember young boys and drink their red blood – I would not regard it as anything extraordinary, I would deeply regret it – but as a scientist I would include the interesting case in my work, as a new example of this ancient Labartu cult.”

This beautiful and kind lady – that was Lotte Lewi!

It had seemed possible to Doctor von Kachele, possible! – But to Frank Braun it not only seemed possible, but probable – more than that, almost certain!

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If she was Labartu, if she was the blood Countess and the voodoo priestess – then he could only be her sacrificial victim: him!

She had a new method, none of the ones that the professor knew. She thought in a modern way, therefore her methods must be modern too. Very clever and slow.

No swift death for her victim – oh no! A slow cruel game.

And why him – especially him! It must be – because she loved him! Wasn’t the greatest desire, the greatest thrill of an all-consuming lust, to hurt what one loves best?

She was his lover. His sister. And his mother. She called him her dear boy, her only child –

She sang him to sleep with sweet lullabies.

If this was true – if she was Astarte – then he was, he was – the dismembered child!

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And that would explain at least one thing: his constantly growing, ever increasing fear. This terrible fear, that embedded itself in his face, that would let him go, not even for a minute. Which he also transferred to other women.

It made him flee from her bed, like he had from that of the Diva, that time in Philadelphia. That protected itself – in a hundred cases – instinctively against it, to be alone with Ivy, allowed him to find all possible excuses and invent lies. But now he was at the bottom of this fear.

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Only, that did not help him very much. He saw the phenomenon completely: Lotte – Labartu. He had one fact: her anemia. And the very tangible little knife.

But nothing hooked itself together, nothing formed a relationship. Enormous holes gaped everywhere, which he was not able to cross.

He unhappily took up the fantastic hypothesis of Doctor Cohen again. The doctor had thought it was him – but if this theory was correct, wouldn’t it apply even better to her. She had also been in the South seas, in the Hebrides and the Solomon Islands.

He had come down with malaria, with all its typical symptoms and the anopheles parasites had once ravaged his blood. But he had taken quinine by the pound and finally gotten rid of the disease.

She had lied about ever having the fever; and had acted, as if she scarcely new what malaria was.

That appeared very suspicious to him.

Cannibalism – it was a disease! The physician had explained it. It was caused by an insect bite – no, through the poisonous bite of some sucking animal, a bat, or flying dog. It was a latent disease, that created a mad greed for human flesh and called up the savage thirst for human blood.

Just like the dog, which bites another one that is mad, and then itself becomes mad, and again has the same effect as the bite of a rabid dog that transfers rabies to its victims and makes them bite anything they can get their teeth into. A type of mad rage, running amok!

It was possible – yes it was! Just as possible, as professor von Kachele's hypothesis.

And it would have – in its effect – the same result: where she must drink his blood.

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One point, however, did not fit in with this theory; how did this explanation apply to the other women?

He went over them, one after the other.

He could eliminate one right away: Aimée Breitauer. The little adventure with her had been simple and natural, without the slightest trace of the mysterious fog.

The dancer then. He dug through his memories, for the twentieth time, in order to find something, that might have happened with her that afternoon. He couldn't find anything, not the slightest thing. And yet – when she saw him again – she fled from him, as if from a leper.

He had no explanation for it. But – it could have been Lotte's work, Lotte had taken the dancer into her house that night – and certainly had seen her again later –

Then there was Ivy, his fiancée. Everything about her was clear, bright as the sunlight – up until the last day. Then that last day of madness in the hothouse and the glass city. And then, months later – her short message:

"Go back to your mistress."

Oh she had loved him, little Ivy, as well as she could love anyone. And yet she had chased him away –

He tried to recall every detail, of what had happened behind the bamboo thicket. Up until the second, when he had lost all sense of

consciousness, when he had been completely intoxicated – just as intoxicated as she had been.

There was just one thing that occurred to him, when he thought back over it: the gardener's toolbox.

She had thought of everything when she had prepared their bridal feast. Nothing was missing, not the slightest thing.

Except: a corkscrew and champagne opener. She had somehow forgotten them. Strange and curious –

And so she had brought the toolbox with the tools of the head gardener. Hooks, scissors, probes, and many sharp knives. It could have been pure coincidence – oh yes!

But perhaps – perhaps – it had been intentional –

Knives – like those on Lotte's night table!"

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And finally there was the Diva. When he had gone back into the wings after his speech, her eyes had invited him for that night and she had whispered:

"You bit my lips – I will pay you back tonight!"

He had kissed her. Had he bitten her in that kiss? If he had, he did not remember it. But she had paid him back – and with interest. She had bit him, bit him, like little Ivy had, when the maenad had awoken in her. It had been a battle, a savage struggle between two great beasts –

Until they had both sank back – completely exhausted. They fell asleep. He had not spoken with her for almost two years. But on Christmas eve she had lectured him on Sodom.

And in closing she had spit on him –

"You are a spider! – Are everything – that sucks!"

And he thought: that was all well and good for this wild Frau! She – who slept with all kinds of dogs – and washed in all kinds of waters! A scorn – a raging ridicule, which stimulated her for new adventures!"

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And yet – she, who had wandered through Sodom's deepest depths and highest heights – she know it very well – and Lotte knew it too!

But then couldn't it be something else, something that what she laughingly turned upside down – that she did herself, and accused him of doing it.

That she – was the spider – she was, she was!

Like Lotte Lewi –

Like – yes, like little Ivy as well! – If that was true then she knew very well, what the gardener's toolbox was for!

– He grabbed his head in both hands.

That – that – was –

Impossible? – Nothing was impossible in the human brain! And what grew in one person, could also grow in a second and in a third!

If she – Lotte and the Diva – and Ivy Jefferson – and finally even the dancer –? If they all –?

The anonymous letters occurred to him. They had piled up in thick folders, since he had asked Rossius to save them again, and he could paper his entire apartment with them. Most were merely abusive – but there were also threats, and some very genuine. They would soon find the means, to get him out of the way, this traitor and conspirator, this barbarian German. – This paid agent of the child murdering Kaiser!

It was an out break of Anglo-Saxon rage – oh yes! But was it harmless? Most certainly not! Didn't the English cabal raise the feverish heat of the Yankees to new heights every day? The English officially reported , that the Germans had spread cholera bacilli over enemy cities, so that everywhere in enemy territory the streams were now poisoned. Only babies, children and women were killed by their airplanes, and their cruelties to the captured enemy cried to the heavens. Hands, feet, breasts and sexual parts cut off from ten-year-old girls and boys, tearing the unborn child from out of its mother's body, and carrying it triumphantly around on a bayonet: that was the highest peak of their culture! And in Paris and Rome such drawings and illustrations made their way through the presses of the world and daily ignited the heat of the Yankees anew.

If needed, the enemy even attacked itself . Hadn't the British ambassador in Oslo attempted, to deceive the servant of Sir Roger Casement into murdering his master? Whose tool was the murderer of Jean Jaurés, who today still happily sits in prison without judgment? How had

Carl of Romania died, the marquee from San Giuliano, the Tyrolian Wörnz, the Jesuit general – all three were Germany's most loyal friends? London know that very well, and it also knew, who paid the assassin at Sarajevo, the one that pushed the burning torch into Europe's powder keg!

And he drew the correct conclusion: that if they murdered millions with bullets and grenades, then they would not hesitate, to remove in some other manner an enemy, who was safe from the coincidental bullet, and find some other way to bring him down. With a good poison for example –

Poison? That had been the first thought of Colonel Pearlstein in Torreon! And Doctor Cohen had also mentioned the possibility of some kind of poisoning in his hypothesis –

A slow, creeping poison? Why not? It was just as possible as all the other lunacies that had become reality in these foolish years. And it was most especially possible in this giant city, in which every vice and every crime was driven by laughing red blood!

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He read through his entries once more. Then he scratched out everything that sounded romantic and fantastic, leaving only the bare facts, those, which a child could grasp with its hands. Very little remained, scarcely ten lines or twelve.

The creeping disease with its waves. Up and down, now ending, then swelling up again. Like the ocean and the ebb and flow of the tides, he thought, and it was most certainly related to some outside influence – like the ebb and flow of the ocean are caused by the moon.

– The moon goddess – Astarte! There it was again. But he crossed the words out, with short, hard lines.

This outside influence could only be her: Lotte. Other women – perhaps; that was still uncertain. But she certainly had some relationship to his disease – and his relationship with this Frau was like the ebb and flow of the ocean, was like his health and his illness.

And there was a third thing: the key to everything might perhaps be her little knives. This one or another one, or all of them. He underlined 'perhaps' and 'might'. It really could be that way.

And finally the last, and the most important thing: Lotte van Ness knew the secret. How could he succeed in getting her to talk about it?

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He paced through his room with long strides. Up and down, back and forth. Thinking back, then he stepped up to the writing table, and wrote down a line. Jumped back up, and pondered again.

Oh, he must put it all together, every paragraph, every word, like he had heard it that other time –

He had been a senior in college – and his mother had sent him to England for vacation. She had written down everything for him: what there was to see and where to go.

Up in Lincoln he was supposed to see the Cathedral. His mother had said that it was the most beautiful thing in all of England.

He had looked at the Cathedral. But the old man, who was his guide, had said, that there was something that was much more interesting in Lincoln. He had brought him to an old house, which had looked exactly like all the other old houses of the city.

The white bearded man had said, that once a Jew's daughter had lived there, many centuries ago. She had been the one, that had murdered little Sir Hugh, at Easter tide. And with a hoarse voice he had recited the old Scottish ballad – he searched his memory for it now. Then wrote it down. Slowly, line after line, through long hours. Then he took the paper, read it, and then read it once more – out loud.

Four and twenty bonny boys
Were playing at the ba,
And by it came him sweet Sir Hugh
And he played oer them a’.

He kicked the ba with his right foot
And catched it with his knee
And throuch-and thro the Jew’s window
He gard the bonny ba flee.

He’s doen him to the Jew’s castell

And walked it round about
And there he saw the Jew's daughter
At the window looking out.

"Throw down the ba, ye Jew's daughter,
Throw down the ba to me!"
"Ne'er a bit," says the Jew's daughter,
"Till up to me come ye!"
"How will I come up? How can I come up,
How can I come to thee?
For as ye did to my auld father
The same ye'll do to me."
She's gane till her father's garden,
And pu'd an apple red and green;
't was a' to wyle him sweet Sir Hugh,
And to entice him in.

She's led him in through ae dark door
And sae has she thro nine;
She's laid him on a dressing table
And stickit him like a swine.

And first came out the thick, thick blood
And syne came out the thin,
And syne came out the bonny heart's blood
There was nae mair within.

She's rowd him in a cake of lead
Bade him lie still and sleep;
She's thrown him in Our Lady's draw-well
Was fifty fathoms deep.

When bells were rung and mass was sung
And a' the bairns came hame,
When ever lady gat hame her son,
The Lady Helen gat nane.

She’s taen her mantle her about

Her coffer by the hand
And she's gane out to seek her son,
And wandered oer the land.

She's doen her to the Jew's castell,
Where a' were fast asleep;
"Gin ye be there, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak."

She neared Our Lady's deep draw-well,
Was fifty fathoms deep:
"Wareer ye be, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak."

"The lead is wondrous heavy, mither,
The well is wondrous deip;
A keen pen-knife sticks in my hert
A word I dounae speak.

"Gae hame, gae hame, my mither dear,
Prepare my winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The morn I will you meet."

Now Lady Helen is gane hame,
Made him a winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The dead corpse did her meet.

And a' the bells o merry Lincoln
Without men's hands were rung
And a' the books o merry Lincoln
Were read without man's tongue,
And neer was such a burial
Sin Adam's days begun.

That was it. He stared at the paper, sat there, and didn't move. Wasn't that once more the old myth of of the murder of the sun child?

And it was his case, his is! He saw her little knives lying there, little, pointed, and shiny. They cut, they stabbed – and his blood flowed. First thick, then thin, and finally his heart's blood. Until there was no more left inside.

Yes, yes, no more blood was inside him; he was emptied out, to the last drop. The hoarse voice of the old man in Lincoln rang in his years:

"A keen pen-knife sticks in my hert
A word I dounae speak!"

He had first met Lotte Lewi at a tennis game, in the old Jew's great garden near the zoo in Berlin. She was young at the time and radiantly beautiful like the early rays of the sun on an April morning. And the white and red apple, with which she enticed the poor boy? How often had this eve offered him the fruit, which the snake broke from the tree, Lilith, her ancestor. Ah, he had tasted it at the time, again and again, until he fell asleep in her arms, until –

She had led him through all the dark doors and had enticed him, deep inside into the magical garden of her senses. Then she took her little knife, and laid him out on the slaughter table of her bed. Then she struck.

Now she wanted to put him in a case of lead, wanted to throw him into the well, fifty fathoms deep –

Would his mother come? Would she kneel down at the edge of the well, and call for him? He whispered:

"Gae hame, gae hame my mither dear,
Prepare my winding sheet –"

He would lie beside her, outside the merry city on the Rhine where his father lay and his grandparents and great grandparents. There was still room left for him in the old family tomb.

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In those months he saw Lotte almost daily. But he guarded himself well, would not stay overnight in her house, and would not fall asleep with her during the day. As soon as he felt this empty tiredness creeping into his limbs, he called for his car, and drove back home. He had a special lock made for the door of his apartment and locked himself carefully inside, whenever an attack threatened, and he always carried the key with him. So he believed he was safe from surprises.

She was very healthy during this time – and he was very miserable. He dragged himself tiredly around again with all his poisons.

It was very obvious, that Lotte desired him; she made no attempts to hide it. More than once she said:

“Stay tonight – kiss me!”

But he didn’t stay. Even though everything inside screamed for him to do just what she wanted.

Once he fell asleep anyway, after tea at her place. He was supposed to speak that evening.

In the morning of that day he had felt tolerably well. But in the afternoon, while with her, he was seized with a fever and dizziness. She noticed it immediately, stood up, and went out. Then she came back again, bringing a glass of water, and shaking some powder into it.

“Drink!” She said.

What is it?” He asked.

She answered:

“Chloral! – You’ll sleep for an hour! And then you will feel fresher, when you wake up!”

His fingers twitched, wanting to grasp the glass. But his fear was stronger. He didn’t touch the drink. He called his secretary, and asked him to come over. And bring some arsenic with him – from out of the little drawer – on the left.

She slowly shook her head, sadly, compassionately, and full of love. She didn’t say anything, just sat down beside him, stroking his head and his hands. That was when he fell asleep – in spite of himself.

He woke up, as the servant announced his secretary. She, Lotte, was no longer in the room.

He looked at the clock, he had scarcely slept half an hour.

“Do you have the arsenic?” He cried out to Rossius.

Rossius gave it to him – and he was about to take it. Then hesitated – he felt fresh and healthy. All the emptiness and tiredness was gone. As if blown away, away by Lotte's sweet hands.

Only – it did not last long. Perhaps ten days – or two weeks.

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He was afraid. His fear grew more and more every day.

Then one day he remembered: the man tiger.

How he had laughed, when he had heard the story for the first time,! It had been in Rajputana, the land of the princes –

It was a beast, that prowled alone in the night, around the villages and the huts on the edge of the forest, that attacked people on the roads or on the beach at the ocean – it was not a tiger: it was a man. Or else: it really was a tiger, but one, that could turn itself into a man. All the Hindus believed it, and some of the Europeans as well, at least those of them, that didn't dwell in the large cities, but the ones that new a little of the moist scent of the jungle, the officers, engineers, and tea planters. They knew it just as well as the village people: knew that the one standing over there was a man tiger – or that one there! And on every third moon he would disappear into the bush, and become a tiger, lying in wait through the nights, and then attacking, sinking his claws in the brown flesh, drinking human blood. Then he would dwell again quietly in the village for long weeks, shy, and alone. Eating rice, areca nuts, and chewing betel like all the others. He was avoided by the entire village – and feared.

But then, years later, in German Cameroon, he didn't laugh anymore. The story lived there as well, like everywhere else in India. Only it was a leopard, which they called the man tiger there, not the Royal Bengal tiger.

One day the negroes brought a stocky little man to the sheriff. He only had one eye. He was a man tiger they screamed, and he himself had confessed; that he had been the one that had strangled two children in the past week – and now they wanted the sheriff to hang him. The fellow confessed, that was true. But the sheriff didn't hang him – he didn't believe in it. He examined the children's bodies, which a leopard had attacked and dragged away into the forest, and on the following night he himself went

out with his rifle and shot the leopard. He had the fellow put in jail for his own safety – but he had disappeared that same day back into the bush.

But later, in Boma, he saw two man tigers swing. And this time there was no doubt about it – they had been discovered at the ford, just as they were attacking the sergeant's black wife. He himself heard her screams. He was an old seasoned veteran, one of the colonial troops that feared his lieutenant, and no other devil. He seized them, and brought them to the police station. They were two fellows, wearing leopard skins, and on all their fingers they wore steel caps, bent like claws. With which they attacked, and strangled their victims –

And then again in Gran Chaco. Just like in Asia, like in Africa, it was also there, in the middle of South America, the tale of the living man tiger. But it was not a tiger, not a leopard here: it was a jaguar. And strangely, it was claimed that only women assumed the shape of the beast, not men. Wild women, that transformed themselves into raging jaguars during the night, attacking boys and girls. But also attacking men – strong warriors, as skilled at the hunt as in battle. And these men scarcely defended themselves, but let themselves be throttled, and killed, staring in fear.

He had not seen any cases in the wide countryside, had only heard the stories, over and over again among all the tribes – all through Chaco and further into Paraguay, Bolivia and Argentina. And other travelers confirmed the same story for the peoples of the Brazilian jungles, on the Xingu, Tarpejos and Madeira – as far as the Amazon.

He could not determine whether it was based on the belief of the migration of souls, as in India, or around genuine factual happenings, as in Africa – where it crossed from the Congo over to the blue Nile. It was also possible, that both were the case, that it was the same here as on the other continents, fantastic beliefs mixed with bloody reality.

There was no binding link between all these brown, black and red peoples, who were widely separated through land and ocean. And yet the same belief existed everywhere: the belief of an evil person that turned him or herself into a ferocious animal during the night, lying in wait at the edge of the forest or on the edge of the river for its victim. He or she attacked it, strangled it, and then drank its blood. And it was always a large cat – a royal tiger, a leopard, or a jaguar.

Here at home, in Europe, there were only small cats! They were very tame and had lived with humans for centuries. And yet the same belief

existed everywhere, a little smaller, and milder just like the animal. The gray cat was always the companion of the old woman, who was a witch, and it often was the witch herself, that snuck around among the houses and villages and brought mischief. Really they did not dare attack an adult, not even a boy or girl, because they were much too small. But they attacked the baby in the cradle while they were asleep, pressed up close against it, and choked it. Didn't you see stories like that every year in the newspapers, where once more a cat had killed a child? And the folk believed – not the people, who dwelled in the cities, but those who dwelled in the mountains and in the villages near the forest and near the water – that the gray cat was not an animal, but much more, it was a demon, a nightmare, a witch: an evil, unredeemable human, that understood sorcerers magic.

Ah – the same belief existed throughout the entire world! And in the same form – only revised in the smallest details through the various customs. Everywhere it was cats – only seldom did the wolf step into its place – the werewolf, and that was always in areas, where it was the only ferocious animal, where there were no large cats and where the belief was still strong enough, that the murder could not have been done by a house cat.

A superstition – and the same one everywhere? In all times and in all parts of the world? But he had seen the man tigers hang with his own eyes, had been sitting in the courtroom, and had seen one of the leopard skins. Later he had talked to sheriff out of one of the leopard skins with the sharp steel claws! It hung in his mother's house, above the golden Buddha, he would see it again, if he ever got back home.

The man tiger, was a human, who transformed itself into a bloodthirsty animal, – it was either highest fantasy or something very natural – such humans existed, there was no doubt of that. They were everywhere in the world – why not in the middle of Manhattan?

Lotte Lewis's eyes were green, like those of a cat. They glowed in the darkness –

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He went across to Hoboken. Great ice cakes floated down the Hudson, crashing against the wooden halls of the boat and breaking into smaller

pieces through which the ferry slowly plowed its way with a crunching, grinding noise.

Today the ambassador was leaving, with his entire staff and with all the German consuls in the United States. He still wanted to speak to one of them: ask him to take a message home to his mother.

No letter, oh no! The Danish steamer would still obey the Masters of the ocean, despite the German submarine blockade that enclosed England. It would stop in Halifax, where they would search everyone just as thoroughly as they would in Kirkwall, and the English would confiscate every little scrap of paper.

But a couple of spoken words – that might be possible!

He didn't get through. A cordon of police and soldiers was drawn around the Danish pier. The few hundred men and women, that were being driven out of this country seemed that dangerous to the Yankees. They were like poisonous animals. Like outsiders. They were German.

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There were Star-Spangled Banners on all the houses, and hanging from all the windows, even across the streets. Next to it flew the Union Jack, tricolored, then Russian, and Italian flags. Japanese flags, Serbian flags, Belgian flags – an ocean of colors; the outcry: war, war against Germany! Against the Huns, the barbarians, the child killers – against the arch enemies of all humanity, the Germans.

He knew: that this was England's greatest victory. It had won here, not at the field of Flanders and in Poland. And at the same time this was the end of Bismarck's heritage, the end of Germany. Now there was only one thing left: to die with dignity. What use is human life, he thought, what use is the death of a people – When only their actions are beautiful! But they will never understand it, never – not the Germans! Because they are such pathetic failures at lying, because they can never learn how to lie; perhaps the most grandiose lies, which they themselves believed and lied into reality. But the poisonous, and deadliest lies – never! And the most beautiful, high and far-reaching ones, most certainly not those either! Death in a beautifully draped toga, performed majestically, a transfiguration – but it was a lie, backstage stuff, just a Punch and Judy show – they knew that

very well. Dying in the mud, starving from hunger, covered with sores and wounds, their intestines eaten away by poisons and parasites, and spit upon by everything that was healthy – all creatures died, and that was the reality. So they would die that way, as well: miserable, mean and common.

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He should remain there or attempt to go to Mexico, and find work there. Attempt to perhaps –

He knew very well: that there was no ‘perhaps’ anymore. Now the entire Earth stood against his country – if only Mars would bring help to his people!

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The train was leaving very early, the one that would take him to St. Louis.

He was with Lotte that evening, to say goodbye. They had dinner together, and sat in the library. He loved her so much, so much.

They sat hand in hand, chatting. He was tired, like he always was these days; but he felt better when she held his hand, and her pulse beat against his.

“Don’t go yet, stay for awhile!” She said, every time he thought to get up. “Stay a little, just a little longer, dear boy.”

And he stayed. He knew very well, that she wanted to keep him with her, for this last night. Every suspicion awakened in him and every fear. But his desire to feel her white flesh was stronger, much stronger. This longing for her touch, for the softest caress of her fingers, for the faint pulse of her blood. Fawning, lulling, soothing.

He stayed. For one hour and then another. Sat with her, and held her hand.

Then she stood up. “Come!” She said.

He shook his head. “No, no!” He whispered. “I want to go home.”

She kissed him. “Are you afraid – of me?” She said softly.

He just nodded. Stared at her, helplessly, and pleadingly. Just a word, oh, just a touch of her hand – then he would follow her.

But she didn't speak it, didn't speak that word.

"You should sleep alone," she said. "Just stay – so that I can see you one more time tomorrow morning, before you leave."

She led him into the room that was next to her bedroom.

"Lock yourself in," she said, "lock it, shove the bolt! Wait, I will bring you an alarm clock – so you will know when it is time to get up."

She went out. He looked around – this was the room, which she let the maid sleep in from time to time, when she didn't feel well. There was a bed, and a little bathroom –

He remained standing on the spot, and just stood there. He didn't move. Oh, he would much rather have gone back home –

Then she came back, already undressed, wearing only a kimono; and she brought the alarm clock.

"I set it for 6:30," she said. "So we can have breakfast together yet."

He took the clock, and placed it in front of him on the table. Finally he lifted his eyes, and looked at her.

And it seemed, as if something was forcing him to her. Not just desire anymore, not just longing – ah, an overpowering desire! For her – her –

She was his life – his blood and his health!

Just to touch her, just to touch her.

He took her, grabbed her, and kissed her. Then he wrapped his arms around her, and pressed her against him, tightly, so tightly.

"Lotte!" He sobbed. "Lotte!"

Then he tore himself loose, and pushed her away. "Go, go!"

And she laughed. "Good night!" He heard. And then he locked the door.

Why didn't she stay? – Why didn't she take him with? He wanted to scream, scream! All his torment screamed out – all his desire –

But also fear, fear! – Something was going to happen this night!

He didn't call her back. He went around in the room, locking the doors, and shoving the bolts closed. Then he took a chair, pushed it against the door, and placed a pitcher of water on it. It would fall down, if she tried to open it. It would make a murderous sound, and that would wake him up.

He sat up in the bed straining to listen.

Then he jumped up again. Tested the walls, searched for a hidden carpeted door. Opened the closet, looked inside, knelt down, and looked under the bed. Nothing. And no sound came from her room.

Yet he didn't dare to get undressed, to fall asleep. He went to the telephone, called his secretary, and had quite a time to wake him up. He asked him to be at the train station the next day. He stretched out the conversation as long as possible, giving superficial instructions.

Then he sat down at the table, took up the quill and paper, and thought back, on what he should write.

"Dear Lotte" it was over and over again: "Dear Lotte".

He crossed it out – tore out the page, and took up a new one. But it didn't help –

Then he gave up. – She would find the letter the next day, and would know that he was with her, with only her in these final hours.

"You," he began, "you – you!" He repeated it, and then crossed out the line. "Dearest," he wrote, "Dearest – you" –

It was no letter, no sentences would come out. Only a word, a word. Only a poor stammering, a tortured sobbing, a desperate cry of longing, fear and despair – tears and blood.

Then – then he felt, how his hand refused to obey. He stared down – looked at both fingers, which held the quill. They remained still, stiff – unmoving.

His brain gave the command: press the quill down – on to the paper! Write!

But the hand didn't move.

Cold sweat covered his forehead – a shivering seized him, a trembling and shuddering. Ah, he recognized it – but it was stronger today – so much colder. It was as if his body was congealing from the bottom up.

He fought, fought. His will was directed only to his hands, only to the two fingers, which held the quill. "Write", pressed his soul, write! Write one more time, just one word! Write!"

Wide, wide open eyes stared intently down at the hand, as if they wanted to give their last power to it. And then he saw, saw. How they bent down to the paper. Slowly – infinitely slowly –

Ah – then the quill touched the paper.

"Write!" Screamed his soul. "Write: Lotte!"

Then the quill moved. Just a little – barely recognizable. It wrote: “Mother”.

Then the powerless hand fell, and limply rolled back across the table.

But the word stood there, – “Mother”. He saw it clearly.

His eyelids fell shut, heavily, and deeply shadowed. But he still saw the thin little word: “Mother”.

There was still a spark in him – some thought. But then it came, he felt it. Then it came – the end. It was completely dark.

And again – there was light inside the other room. If only he could get up – and open the door – go to her. Inside the other room was life – red life –

Everything in here was black – so very dark. Everything inside him had been extinguished – everything – and himself as well.

– His head sank heavily onto the table.

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A raging noise tore through the air. A cutting, hammering and whistling, the wild crowing of a hundred roosters, while the cook pulled a sharp knife across their throats.

That woke him up.

He stood in the middle of the room. What was it?

He rubbed his eyes – and looked around.: The alarm clock! He went to the table, and turned it off. 6:30 – very good – it was time to get up.

He was fully dressed. He turned around: the chair had been pushed to the side, the one which he had placed in front of the door to Lotte’s room – the water carafe stood nearby on the carpet.

And the door gaped wide open.

He listened – and didn’t hear a sound.

So she was still asleep, despite the ghastly alarm clock?

Then he felt the taste on his tongue. Sweet, very sweet – it was a soft peculiar taste. Because of staying here overnight, he thought.

But he hesitated – didn’t he recognize this strange taste?

He closed his eyes – thought back – licked his lips. The taste became stronger – it was sweet, strangely sweet. Just the way it had tasted – exactly like – it had tasted once in a duel when his tongue had hung out from his lips and licked the blood that was streaming down his face.

It was the taste of blood!

I must rinse my mouth out, he thought, brush my teeth –

He went into the bathroom, stepped up to the toilet table. And his gaze fell on the mirror.

He saw –

His mouth was bloody, covered with blood down to his chin and there were bloodstains on his collar, shirt and jacket – and on his hands – his hands –

They were red, red, as if he had bathed in blood.

He stared at the image in the mirror. That was him – Frank Braun. And he was covered with blood.

What had happened, what?

He rushed into Lotte's room – to her bed. There she lay – pale – oh so pale! She was tightly wrapped in pillows and linen, covered up to her chin – but there were blood stains everywhere – large – red stains, everywhere his eyes looked. And on the night table, wildly scattered were the little, bloody knives –

He tore back the cloth and her nightgown. Then he saw her breast – saw the cuts and stab wounds –

So many wounds –

What animal – what savage, greedy animal had –?

What horrible, disgusting beast –

He himself! Himself had done it!

He fell down upon his knees.

"Lotte!"

Chapter Fifteen: Hematites

This maxim shall you write on the hematite amulet, that hangs around the neck of the dead: "Stand up from the nothingness, you cast down man! You will awaken in the radiant heavens above your head. You will cast down your enemy, you will triumph over all things that stand against you – like Horus, the avenger of his father. Osiris commands, that it shall happen for you. You will cut off the heads of your enemies; and your own head will never be carried away. Truly: Osiris shall cut off the heads of his enemies – and they shall never take his head!"

The book of the dead, chapter 166

His cell was seven foot long, seven foot wide and seven foot high. And there was plenty of work: catching bedbugs, lice and cockroaches. That was only possible during the day – when a small electric light burned in his cell. That was when it was quiet in the enormous prison.

But at night it broke loose. Sometimes, when he had only been sleeping for a few minutes, he would quickly wake up again, half awake, confused, drunk with sleep, and believed he was in the jungle. Somewhere out there, on the upper Pilcomayo, or in the middle of the Gran Chaco. He listened to the voices around him, far and near – disembodied voices, which had lives of their own; which had become creatures, without bodies, throats and tongues. The croaking of tapirs – was that a bullfrog over there? The grinding and shuffling of land crabs – no, no, that was a Jaguar –

Then, gradually, he recognized the sounds. Snores, sighs, singing and laughing in sleep. The coughing and painful breathing of consumptives. And, from down below, the agonized screams of those, whom they whipped and beat. recalcitrant criminals, poor lunatics, and others, from whom they wanted to force a confession.

This happened every night.

The blanket, which they gave him, was crawling with bugs. It was unspeakably dirty, stiff with pus from the sores of former inmates. A Negro in the adjoining cell was sentenced to the electric chair for murder. He taught him, how to cover himself with newspapers – and that helped him to keep warm a little.

– Hours at first, then days. Weeks. And months.

There was no connection with the outside world. None with the other prisoners inside the prison. There was nothing. – Only the cell – and him inside it. He learned from the guard, who pushed grub into the cell through a small opening in the door, that there were other Germans in the prison. They were all locked in like he was, behind huge, windowless stone walls, behind heavy iron gates, between criminals, pimps and murderers.

Once, in the middle of the night, there was the sound of heavy footsteps; and an entire troop came in. A loud Schwabian voice cried out, in German: “Are there any bedbugs in here?”

The laughter echoed back, from all corners of the giant hall: “Yes! – Yes! – As many as you want!”

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He had a pencil stub, about an inch long. He tore the edges off from the newspapers, smoothed them out neatly and put them together; like a notebook. This was to be the conclusion of his journal. He left the first few pages blank – beginning from the moment when he had fallen forward, his head dropping onto the table, up until the moment, when he had regained consciousness, standing in the middle of the room, terrified into awakeness by the screaming of the alarm clock. Only one person could fill in this gap: Lotte.

Then he wrote. How his tongue had tasted the sweet blood; how he had stood in front of the mirror, covered with blood. How he had ran into Lotte’s room. How he had found her –

He had held her in his arms, praying her name. Yet what had come out – and he didn’t know how, was a different word: “Maria”.

“Strange,” he thought, “why had he called her that: Maria?”

Maria – that was the name of the girl from Vienna. The one who had believed in him, who had sung the bridal song to him, as he departed. The one that couldn’t live without him – who had taken a little revolver, when his letter came –

His fool’s letter.

And Maria had been his mother’s name. “Mother Maria,” he had always called her when he was a boy.

“Maria,” he had prayed as he knelt by Lotte’s bed, “Mother Maria”!

And there was another – She, who carried seven swords in her flaming heart. Whose breast was red with blood: Maria, Mother of God, Holy Virgin! He had stammered her name “Maria”.

He had prayed softly:

“Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut –”

– She had heard him, and had opened her eyes.

Very softly her finger had touched his hand. And her lips had moved.

He had put his head against hers and read the whispered words from her lips.

“Put the lancet case away,” she had said.

He had obeyed. Had thrown the scissors and little knives into it, had closed the case and put it in the closet. Then he had come back to the bed.

Again she had whispered:

“Wash up! Put on a clean shirt.”

“Lotte,” he had pleaded, “Lotte! You – you –”

But she had insisted:

“Do it!”

He had done, as she had commanded. Undressed, washed, and had put on a clean shirt and collar. And then he had put the bloody things into the laundry basket.

She had followed him with her eyes, smiling quietly.

She had breathed:

“That is good. Now call up the Doctor – Doctor Cohen.”

He had picked up the receiver, and called. He had to come immediately, to Frau van Ness. – No, not in an hour. – Immediately, now,!

What was wrong? He had hesitated –

“Hemorrhage!” She had whispered.

“Hemorrhage!” He had cried into the telephone. How bad was it –? Yes, it was terrible, yes – very dangerous! – Had she lost much blood? – Yes, very much – terribly much! – What, you are still in bed? – He would come immediately, and would be there in thirty minutes! And in the meantime he should give the patient something to drink. – What? –

Anything: milk, tea, champagne, mineral water, strong coffee, whatever was available! – Anything! As much as possible! She must drink – drink!

He had hung up the receiver. Then he had jumped up – but her gaze had held him. She had pointed to a bloody knife that lay next to her pillow.

“Search!” She had whispered. He had searched in the bloody linen – and had found another one.

“The Boric ointment!” She had said. “Over there!”

The can had stood on the night table. He had taken it, and opened the cover.

“You do it, my love,” she whispered. “No one but you shall see my breasts!”

He had pulled back her nightgown. He had washed her wounds with Cologne water, and had counted seven, seven of them.

Little ones – deep, deep. Red scars – and each with a drop of blood in it.

Like the strip of blood, which he had so often seen in dreams. On the Goyita’s breast, when she had danced the rumba –

His fingertips had trembled. He had washed her wounds – it hurt. She had flinched, flinched.

And he had kissed her, tenderly, softly – with quivering lips. She had smiled at that.

“Are you healthy?” She had whispered.

He had shrank back – had stared at her.

But she had smiled. Breathed:

“You drank so much milk, my dear boy! So much red milk!”

Her eyes had caressed him so tenderly, so tenderly.

“Mother,” he had thought, “Dear mother Maria.”

He had put the ointment on her red wounds, had spread it with shaking fingers. He had buttoned her bloody nightgown back up, right up to her throat.

Then she had let him go for the first time. He had ran out, and screamed for the maid. He had ordered her to make some tea, to bring some champagne, and had grabbed after some mineral water.

Then he had sat down again beside her – and had put the glass to her lips.

“Drink, drink!”

– Then Doctor Cohen had came. But before she had turned to the doctor, she lips had whispered:

“Now go, my friend. You can still catch your train. Go!”

“I’m staying here!” He cried.

But she had slowly shaken her head.

“No, you must go. I want you to. Think of me!”

Her hands had softly stroked his hair, her lips had kissed his eyes.

“Live well,” she had breathed, “live well, dear boy. I – thank you!”

“I thank you!” She had said. He had heard it clearly: “I thank you.” She, she had said that – to him!

He had stood up; he had left, walking backwards to the door – and had seen her sweet smile for one last time.

He had reached the street and then gone to the train station.

That’s where they had grabbed him, had placed him in handcuffs, and had brought him to prison.

Him, the German agent. The very dangerous German agent. The one who had dared, to work against England in this country.

What did he care? And if they locked up all the Germans in this country – what was that to him? – Only not her, not her – not Lotte!

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He laid the scraps together. She could have them, she – the one who had healed him.

She had known about him all that time! And had remained silent, not saying anything – because she had realized, that one word would destroy it all. He – he had not been permitted to know, what he did. Because, if he had known – he wouldn’t have done it anymore.

And only, because he had done it: was he healed, that alone. Only that could heal him in the end.

So she had remained silent, silent.

That’s why she had hung the little crystal ball on a golden chain around her neck: the winged Griffin was supposed to give her milk – red milk for her child. That’s why she had carried the ring with the pelican: because she was tearing her own breast open, to feed her young. Foolishness, whims of

a bizarre Frau – but a Frau, that thought of nothing other, then him and his happiness.

That's why she had the little scissors and little knives – so that he could cut better and more deeply into her flesh. So the spring would flow more richly – the spring that was life to him –

That's why she had taken the sleeping potion – in order to lie quietly: his miserable bleeding sacrifice. In order not to awaken him through the screams of her pain, when he had been possessed by the greed for blood.

But later, later she hadn't needed any more sleeping potion's.

She had let him stab and cut and suck and drink. She had allowed herself to be torn apart – and had smiled while he was doing it.

She had been a priestess, putting the sacrificial knife in its proper place. And she had even decorated the sacrifice for him, herself.

And that was the single thing that she had been jealous of, that alone she would not share with any other Frau. That's why she had given him the little knife to take with on his trip to Mexico.

It had remained shiny, very shiny. And had only shown bloodstains – after the mescal hours with the Goyita. Now he understood very well, what had happened.

He understood the slap, that he had received on Christmas Eve. He understood Ivy's letter and the scorning hatred of the Diva. And the terrified flight of the dancer.

They had spit on him, for what he had done to them –

But Lotte Lewi had kissed him! Again and again, over and over again. It was for him that she had taken the cure, for him that she had swallowed everything, that would give her more blood. So that his own greedy lips could become red colored, and become sated from drinking her heart's blood.

– He had been so blind all this time. Had seen nothing, nothing at all. He had thought, that she was the bloodthirsty goddess, she was the sorceress, who had poisoned him. That she was the spider – that she was the disgusting animal!

What had she said, when he had come to see her that night from the terrace garden? He again heard the cello tones of her voice:

"The highest thing, that a woman can do for her man, whom she loves, that a mother can do for her only child, that a savior can do for a suffering

humanity – that, that is what you taught me to do: the most marvelous thing, the most divine thing!”

Divine she had called it! – Said that he had taught it to her – that he had! And she had thanked him: those were her last words, as he had left.

She had thanked – him!

That was the way she had taken it – Lotte Lewi!

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“South 2.19!” Someone shouted. That was his number.

They were lined up in the prison yard, eighteen Germans. They were chained together, two by two; and so they marched through the streets surrounded by watchful soldiers. They were taken from their prison in Brooklyn across to Manhattan. Over the bridge, very slowly, so that the public could stare at them. They stopped everywhere, for a half hour at a time; waiting – no one knew why.

“Sons of bitches!” Shouted the people, “wretched spies, German dogs!”

Flags, flags! Many new ones had been added, those nations that had declared war on Germany following Washington’s lead.

For justice and freedom against the barbarian Huns – and just as important, to get away with stealing Germany’s possessions unpunished. China, Siam, South America, the West Indies, and the Central American monkey republics. Their flags waved just as proudly in the wind as all the others.

Giant signs hung on all the houses: “Buy freedom bonds!” The signs depicted soldiers with spiked helmets, who killed naked babies with their bayonets, high-minded American Red Cross sisters, who cared for the wounded in the middle of a rain of bullets. A German officer, who nailed a pregnant living women to a cross; a chorus girl from Broadway as the virgin of New Orleans, and an English St. George, who killed the poisonous German Dragon.

A couple thousand soldiers in khaki marched across Park-Row. Many were flat-footed and bowlegged, often limping and waddling, but still in step and carrying themselves with high spirits. The Star-Spangled Banner waved in front of them and – another flag. Blue and white stripes, with a

blue star in the middle: the Mogen Dovid! Jews from the East side following their own flag, Jewish legionnaires, that were going to Palestine. They marched out, to fight the Germans, marched out, to plunder a new province for England.

Frank Braun laughed out loud.

“Where is Lotte’s flag?” He thought. “Where is the banner of Levi?”

He was pulled sharply around by his fetters, as his chained companion made a sharp movement to the side, and turned back to him.

“What is it?” Asked Frank Braun.

“An old woman pressed something into my hand,” the other answered. “A piece of paper.” He took the scrap of paper and read it out loud: “She is better!”

Frank Braun threw a quick glance at it. He recognized Doctor Cohen’s hand handwriting. “Give it to me,” he cried. “That is for me.”

They marched on. “She is better,” he murmured, “she is getting better.”

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They were transferred to another prison; and then a couple of weeks later to a third one in New Jersey. Here they housed forty Germans, down below in a coal cellar. One hour a day they were allowed to go out into the prison yard for a breath of fresh air.

From here he could write several times; and receive news from her doctor. It was always the same: “She is getting better.”

But never: She is well. Never – never once through all the long months.

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Then – and again for long months – he was in a prison camp down in the south.

The same faces, the same days and nights. He ran around like a sleepwalker during this time.

They all thought, that he was a little crazy. That he had snapped, like so many others. It did not matter, and no one paid much attention to it – one got used to it in the camp.

But it was simply, that he didn’t feel anything, didn’t see anything, didn’t think –

Except for one thing: Lotte.

Then, suddenly, it broke loose. Without any reason. He stood by the barb wire fence, staring outward. A sergeant passed by, and he called out to him.

“Would you like to make a hundred dollars?”

The America listened carefully. – Oh, it would be very easy! All he had to do was smuggle him out, and take him along for one night into the city. And he held the hundred dollar bill under the soldier’s nose.

That evening three men came to pick him up. They made a show of putting revolvers in their belts. And the sergeant said: “Neither of them drink!”

Frank Braun laughed. No, he didn’t want to get them drunk, didn’t want to escape. He only wanted to be certain, that he was still human.

They drove to the city. – Doing whatever, could be called intemperate in that bone dry province. First a bar, where they served “strong tea”: Bay rum, Witch Hazel, or Westfall’s hair tonic, to choose from. It was served in cups, but from the original bottles, and over seventy percent alcohol. The sergeant poured the stuff down in one swig. But Frank Braun only sipped his, it tasted horrible.

“Isn’t there anything better?” He asked.

“Just follow me!” Laughed the sergeant.

They marched through drugstores, through gaming dives and whorehouses. They drank moonshine and homebrew with black and white women. They played poker, Bacharach and Roulette.

There he raged through the night. Tore at his chains, and limped through the rooms like a sailor after a long voyage. It was a scream for freedom, from out of this confinement, that measured his days with a ruler.

That was what it was. But there was something else as well – and even more: he was healthy and strong, and wanted to feel his strength. An instinct tore at him, a pure animalistic pleasure.

“Just like an animal,” he thought, “thank God!”

And he threw dice, played cards, drank, and reached for the women.

They sat there, three fellows in khaki and he, between ten half naked women. One sat at the piano, one strummed the guitar and three bellowed out the Hoola-Hoola-song. An octaroon leaned over him and whispered:

“Come with me!”

He didn’t pay any attention to her. Banged the leather dice cup on the table:

“Three aces!”

The octaroon bent down deeply, filled his glass, and urged: “Are you coming?”

He looked at her. She was white and young and very beautiful. Her naked breasts gleamed.

He slowly shook his head.

“No,” he said.

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The censor permitted two letters a month, which he wrote to his mother. But he wrote to New York every day – the soldiers mailed them – for a good tip. Just a few lines – and only once was it more than that. There was a rhythm pulsing in him, so he wrote verse.

He wrote:

“And it happened – oh, at least twice and more
And then again – since that sweltering night
And that hour, which will never
Come again – when a sobbing seized me.
– The blonde, I think, laughed at it,
Perhaps cried, because she didn’t understand it –
From out of her scream, out of her scream of lust,
Your voice sounded, Lotte, your body cried out
And cried out for me. And you were joined with me
And you cried: “I – am – your – woman!”
– Oh you know, I was loyal to you,
Lotte – in my own way.

“And it happened – so many lovely times –
– when the bottles spewed and the whores screamed,
The boozing companion beat me – one more damned time! –
My beautiful ace with his bare ten –

Then suddenly it seemed, as if the fog cleared
In a perfume of Jicky and Verveine,
In your perfume – and now the scream has become silent.
And I am lonesome, Lotte, and am alone
And am only with you. And travel your travels
And drink your blood and sip your wine –
– oh you know, I was loyal to you,
Lotte – in my own way.

"And it happened – that time in early March –
I was scarcely awake and gazed in wonder at the world;
A ripe red mouth kissed my young heart
And a clever white hand took my hand
Down the old path, that is always new –
Oh Lotte, long before I knew you!
Yet I know, that I silent and shy as a boy
Walked to the temple and into the pronaos,
And that a desire, came out of my frenzy:
My desire knelt at my altar to you –
Oh you know, from the beginning of time, I have been true to you,
Lotte – in my own way."

And he wrote her name at the top.

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Just once, in all that time, came a line from her. Often telegrams, often letters from her doctor. "She is getting better" they would say, and again: "She is getting better!"

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The bells were ringing in the city. Cannons were booming and all the steam whistle's screeching from all the surrounding factories. It began at 4

o’clock in the morning, and lasted through the entire day: Armistice – the Germans were begging for peace.

The prisoners slunk through the swamp of their camp like whipped dogs. They did not speak and did not dare look each other in the eye.

They were ashamed of themselves, and of the others –

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Months still, months. Then suddenly a telegram from Lotte, that he was now free. The Colonel sent for him; he had just gotten the news from Washington.

“You must have pull,” the Colonel said. “Who is it?”

He didn’t answer him.

But it still took days. And every day he wired: “Tomorrow” – and he counted the hours, crossing them off one by one.

He ran around in a fever.

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He sat in a Pullman car. Bought newspapers at every train station, and read them. He ran back and forth through the train, sitting down and immediately standing back up again.

Inpatient, restless –

Took a book, began to read. Then clapped it shut again.

One cigarette and then another.

Then he found the rhythm of the train. He leaned back in his chair, and hummed along with it, closing his eyes.

He didn’t fall asleep; only dreamed in a half awake state.

Of the man, who had spit out black mice. Of the fat man, who drank so much water – more, more! Of the hedgehog, that had devoured the eggs of the toad, of the dead Chinese, who had floated around the fever ship. Of the small stripe of blood on the rumba breast of the Goyita – oh, and of the wounds, the deep cuts on Lotte’s sweet breasts.

– She could have him in the tombs again – once again. New crimes – so many new crimes. And even worse: a sex crime against Frau van Ness.

She was an American citizen –

He would not lie – would let her bring him down, if she wanted to. Only he wanted to see her, wanted to see her one more time!

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He climbed up the steps to her house. The tall butler opened the door for him – he, he was the one that had been with the Jefferson's before. He saw her chauffeur and a couple of servants and girls, that were down the hall moving plants around. He nodded to all of them, but didn't speak a word, didn't ask, how it was going. He feared for himself –

Lotte's maid led him up to the library, and had him wait there. Then he counted the minutes.

Finally the door opened. A nurse came in, dressed in white, a white dress, white apron and bonnet. He could come, Frau van Ness was waiting for him.

He followed her silently to the bedroom. In front of the door she stopped him: he must not stay too long, the doctor had said, a quarter of an hour, not anymore –

Then he entered; then he was by her bed, burying his head in the pillows.

"There you are," she said. "My darling boy!"

She had made herself beautiful for him, he saw it clearly. Her newly cut hair was rich and red. Her lace gown was Nile green. Emeralds gleamed from her fingers. But they were so thin, so thin –

A little red was on her lips. And powder: Rouge- Brunette. She sat half upright, her back supported with pillows. She smelled of Jicky perfume.

The yellow curtains had been pulled shut. It was a dull white light, a twilight. She looked like a wax figure, brought to life against nature.

That was once her, he thought, that had been her – Lotte. Now it is just her will, her will to exist, that kept her in that body. Her strong will, born of her love – her love for me. She lives for me, he felt, only for me.

"For me!" He whispered.

She nodded. "Yes, for you I did, what I did. – And for Germany also." And she repeated: "Now you are back, my love." She caressed his cheeks,

and ran her fingers softly through his hair. “How do you feel, is it true, that you are fresh and healthy?”

“Yes,” he answered, “entirely healthy.”

“How happy I am!” She said. “I knew it, you know, I felt it – that last night! That’s when you drank yourself healthy!”

“Lotte,” he moaned, “Lotte –”

“Don’t say anything, don’t say a thing!” She said. “Don’t say anything! I am happy, happy – that my blood flows inside you – that it makes you strong and young! Give me a kiss, come here!”

She took his head in both hands, and kissed him softly, on both eyes and cheeks and on the mouth. She grabbed his right hand, and held it tightly.

She looked at him for a long time, and then began again. “You look different than before.”

He asked: “Different how?”

“More German!” She answered. “Much more German.”

She repeated. “German! You went down the path, which I led you – the path to the homeland. You went down it – with me – for me! You became German: my blood flows inside you.”

And she kissed him again.

“I know, what it was,” she continued. “I have thought through it during these long months, while I have been lying here. Still and alone – dreaming of you. You, you only did – what the entire world did.”

Her eyes caressed him tenderly. “It is a savage insanity of all the masses – like there has been a hundred times before in the course of history. Professor von Kachele is going to investigate it for me, as soon as he is finished with his book: he will find all the connections throughout history, brush them off and clarify them. Then you will see, that I am right. Some passionate belief emerges – or even a savage insanity – sometimes we know it’s origin and often we do not. And if it is lucky, it finds good soil and sows the storm, that will grow until it covers the entire earth. It was that way with Christianity, and with Buddhism and Islam. It was also that way with the delusion of the witches, who danced furiously for Satan at their Sabbats, and again the passionate belief of the Inquisition, that burned the souls out of the witch’s bodies, in order to save their souls for heaven. Of the Crusaders, the Albigensians and flagellants up until our time. – It will pass – like the foolishness of the tango, the syncopated lunacy of this city – in

the end it is all the same: small and silly, like the other is large and powerful. And there will come a time when even the savage madness that now rages throughout the world will subside.

“What madness?” He asked.

She said: “It is the blood madness. It began somewhere, in one country or in several at the same time. It is very contagious, and infects, whoever it comes in contact with. It makes humans want blood, blood! – Like you!”

“No, no!” He cried. “Lotte, no! I don’t want it, I don’t want anything of that! Until that last night, when I woke up. – I didn’t know anything about it, nothing!”

She smiled. “I know it, dear boy! But do you believe, that the millions over there know any more? They are not aware of their wild madness, their thirst for blood – just like it was for you.”

“No one wants to drink blood, Lotte, no one!” He said.

She replied: “Are you so sure of that? Are you so certain, that none of them wanted to? That no one wanted it – not even once wanted it, without even knowing? – When a storm rages, only a few leaves fly, very few, high up into the clouds. How many Christians actually wanted to be martyrs? Scarcely one in a hundred thousand! The others were just carried along with it.”

He kissed both of her hands. “You are the martyr, Lotte – you! I – was the animal in the arena!”

“I was too,” she nodded, “I was too! Just as much as you were – and everyone else. Do you think, that I have not dreamed of blood? Of oceans of blood, to drown our enemies? – And if I have grown above it – I have only you to thank for it! The storm seized all the leaves, but carried me high into the clouds and even beyond – high up into the stars!”

A lock of hair fell onto her forehead; and she pushed it back. And her eyes glowed, like the emerald on her hand. “Ask a hundred, ask a thousand and a million – and no one will be able to tell you, how it all happened! They don’t know it – they only know, that it must happen and nothing else. But they see red – all of them, all of them! Like I did – like you! The time is red, red with blood: but only stronger, more savagely revealed inside you! Animalistic – more divine – if you will! Humanity is sick with a fever – and it must drink blood, in order to become healthy and young! And they drink, drink, every day and every hour. When, when will it come to an end?”

“It is at an end!” Said Frank Braun.

She shook her head. “No! No! Not today and not this year! – And not for many years!”

“We are lying on the ground,” he said. There is no more Germany.”

At that her eyes glowed.

“The cast down will stand up from the nothingness!” She whispered. “They will awaken in the radiant heavens above their heads! They will cast down their enemies, will triumph over everything, that stands against them – like Horus, the avenger of his father.”

She interrupted herself, and moved her head toward the door. Which had softly opened.

“Yes, yes,” she cried to the sister, “I know: it is time. You must go now, my love – till tomorrow.” Her hand tenderly caressed his. “You are healthy – I see it, I feel it. You – you drank yourself healthy – when will humanities thirst be stilled? When?” She sank back, her cello voice faded tiredly. “Today is Tuesday – how I have enjoyed this Tuesday! – But you know – every day is now Tuesday: Dienstag, Tirstag, Tuesday, – Mardi, Martes, Martedi! The day of Mars and of Tiu, Gods of the sword! – Every day now – today and tomorrow and always: is a day of swords, a day of war, a day of blood!”

She closed her eyes. “Live well, you!” She whispered. “Till tomorrow!”

She lay there like a wax image, strangely alive, against all nature.

Yet she still breathed –